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INSIDE

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AMAZING SCI-FI MECH SKETCHBOOK

JAMA JURABAEV ON INFINITE PAINTER

NEW WAYS TO

DRAW & PAINT

Create engaging characters and scenes with guidance from **Ramón Nuñez**

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HEIKALA! THE ENIGMATIC ILLUSTRATOR TALKS ABOUT HER VISUAL IDENTITY



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Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



This issue's news feature on How to Win at Failure got me thinking about how we behave as humans. Did you know that our brains are hard-wired to place more importance on negative thoughts than positive ones? Humanity has developed at a great pace, but our brains

still act like they did at the dawn of time, where it was necessary to be on high alert against attack.

It's sad that we're predisposed to spending more time thinking about rejection, mistakes or skills that we lack than we do on plaudits, the times we've done something right, or the expertise that we've successfully gained in life.

In this feature (from page 20) we talked to successful artists about their perceived failures. One quote from it that I loved came from Peter De Sève who said: "When you're down in the dumps, try to remember the times you got it right and how that felt." It's so simply put, yet if we take a moment to follow this advice it will help turn a negative moment into a positive one. I'll hold on to this thought. I hope you do, too. Remember to be kind to yourself. You're awesome – despite what your brain sometimes tells you.

Claire

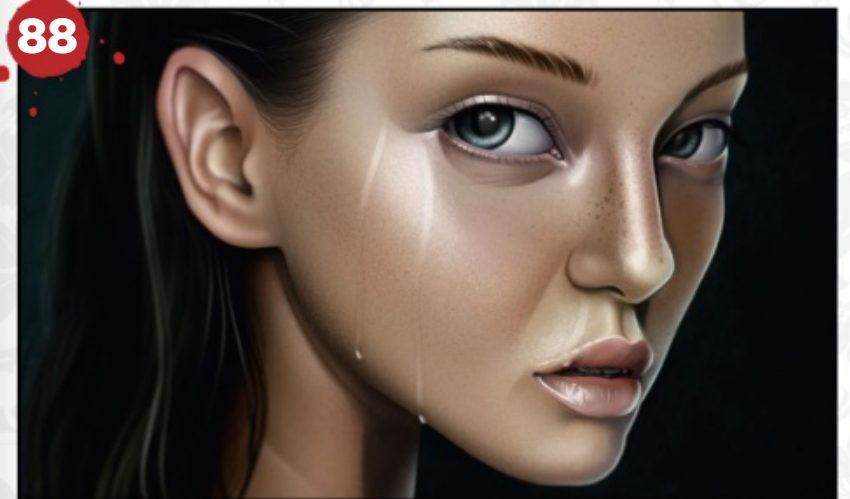
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EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...



The art of Heikala

How can a popular social media artist also retain a sense of self and elusiveness? We find out.



Painting wet skin workshop

Artist Ant Ward goes through his process for blending colours and painting wet skin using Photoshop.



Even bigger line-up announced!

Join Karla Ortiz, Loish, Even Mehl Amundsen, ILM London and Pixar at our London event...

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Artist Portfolio **HEIKALA**

"If witches travel abroad, do they need passports?"

Heikala asks a big question

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Artist Portfolio

PIOTR JABŁOŃSKI

"I have lots of ideas and draw lots of sketches that I never finish"

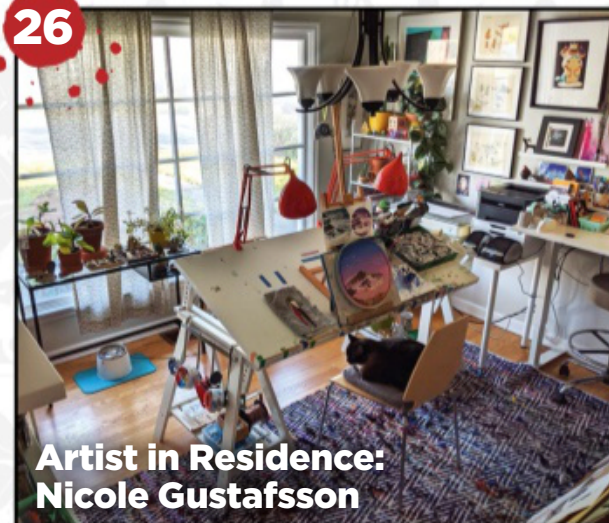
Piotr likes to keep himself busy

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How to win at failure

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Artist in Residence:
Nicole Gustafsson

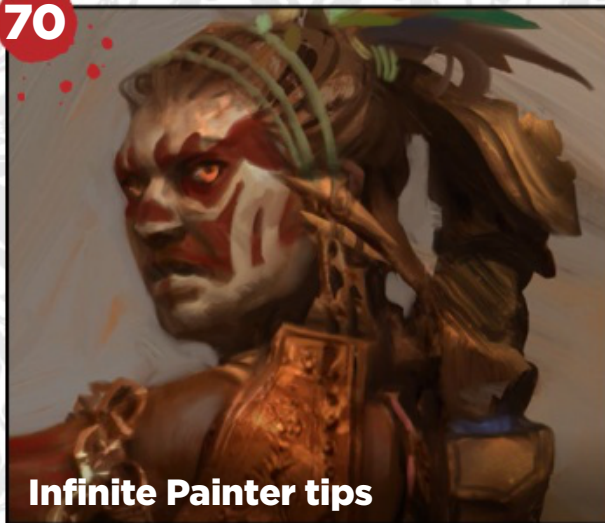


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Sketchbook:
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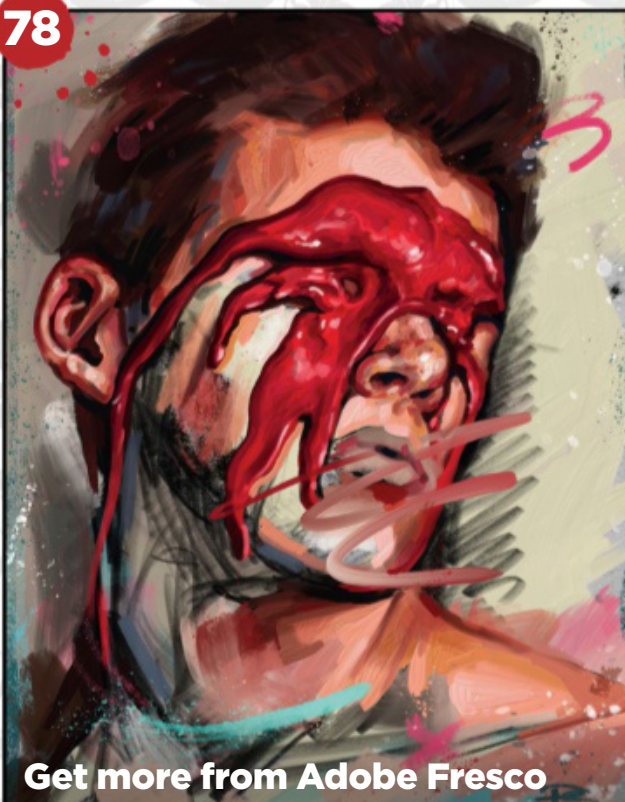
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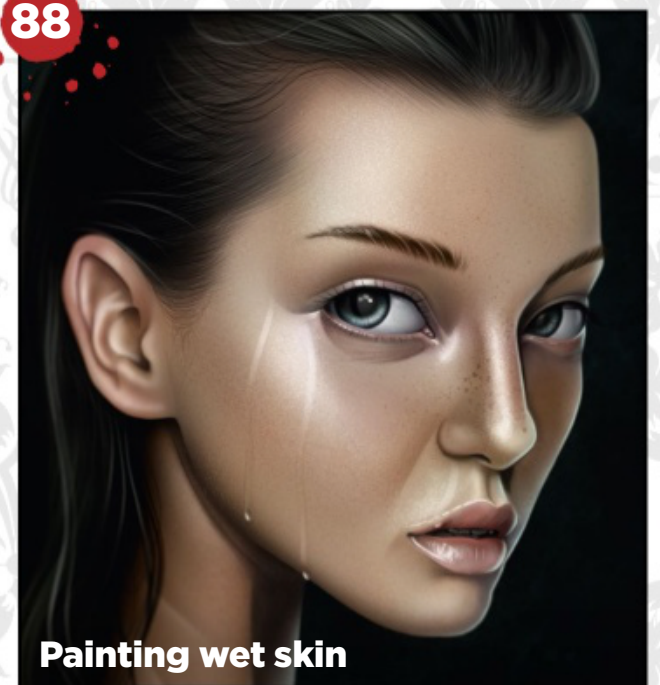
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Create eye-catching painting effects in Flame Painter, with Harvey Bunda.

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Painting wet skin

Traditional Artist

104 Traditional FXPosé

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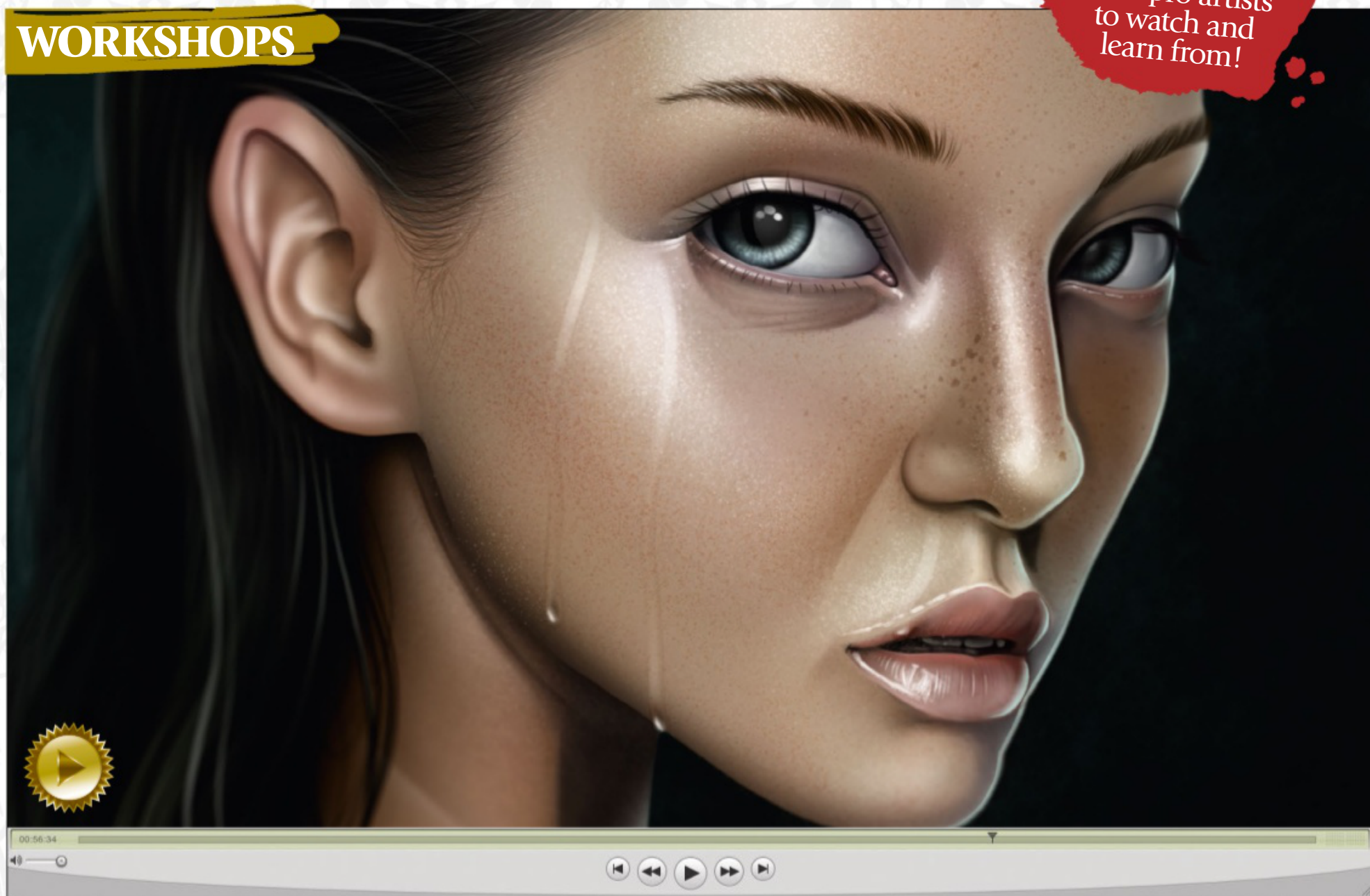
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from pro artists
to watch and
learn from!

WORKSHOPS



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Type this into your browser's
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2 Find the files you want

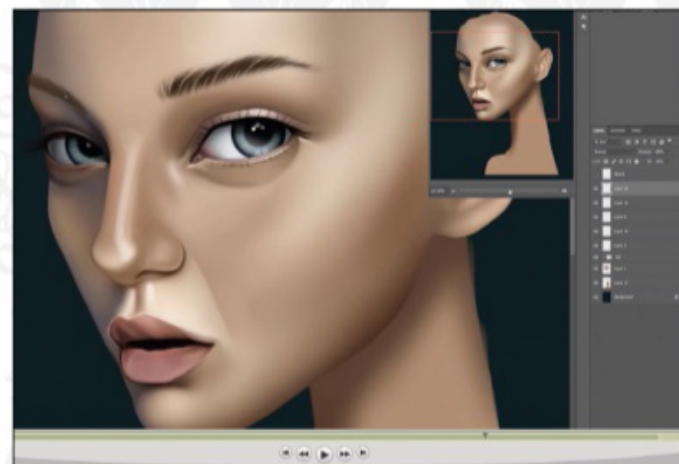
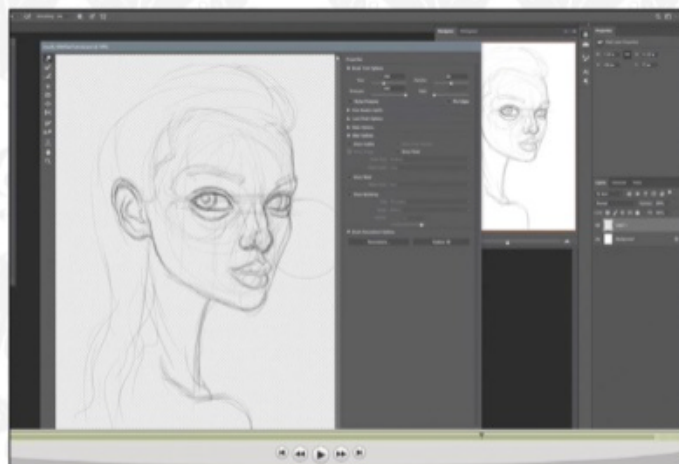
Search through the list of resources
to download.

3 Download what you need...

Download the files or watch them
via a bespoke YouTube link.

Learn how to paint wet skin

See how Antony Ward uses a range of Photoshop techniques to apply water droplets and moisture to his striking character portrait. There's more insights in his workshop on page 88.



NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

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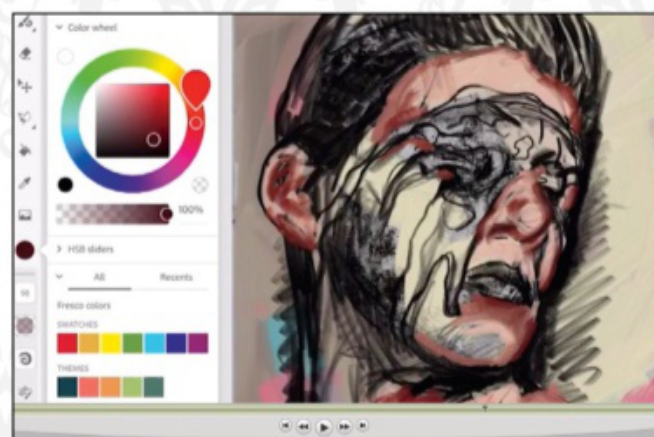
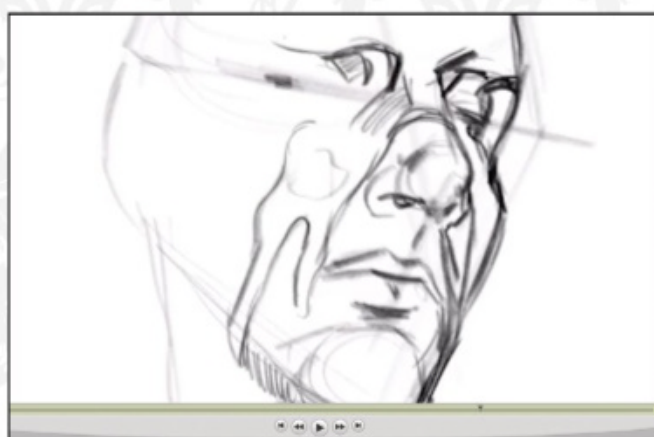
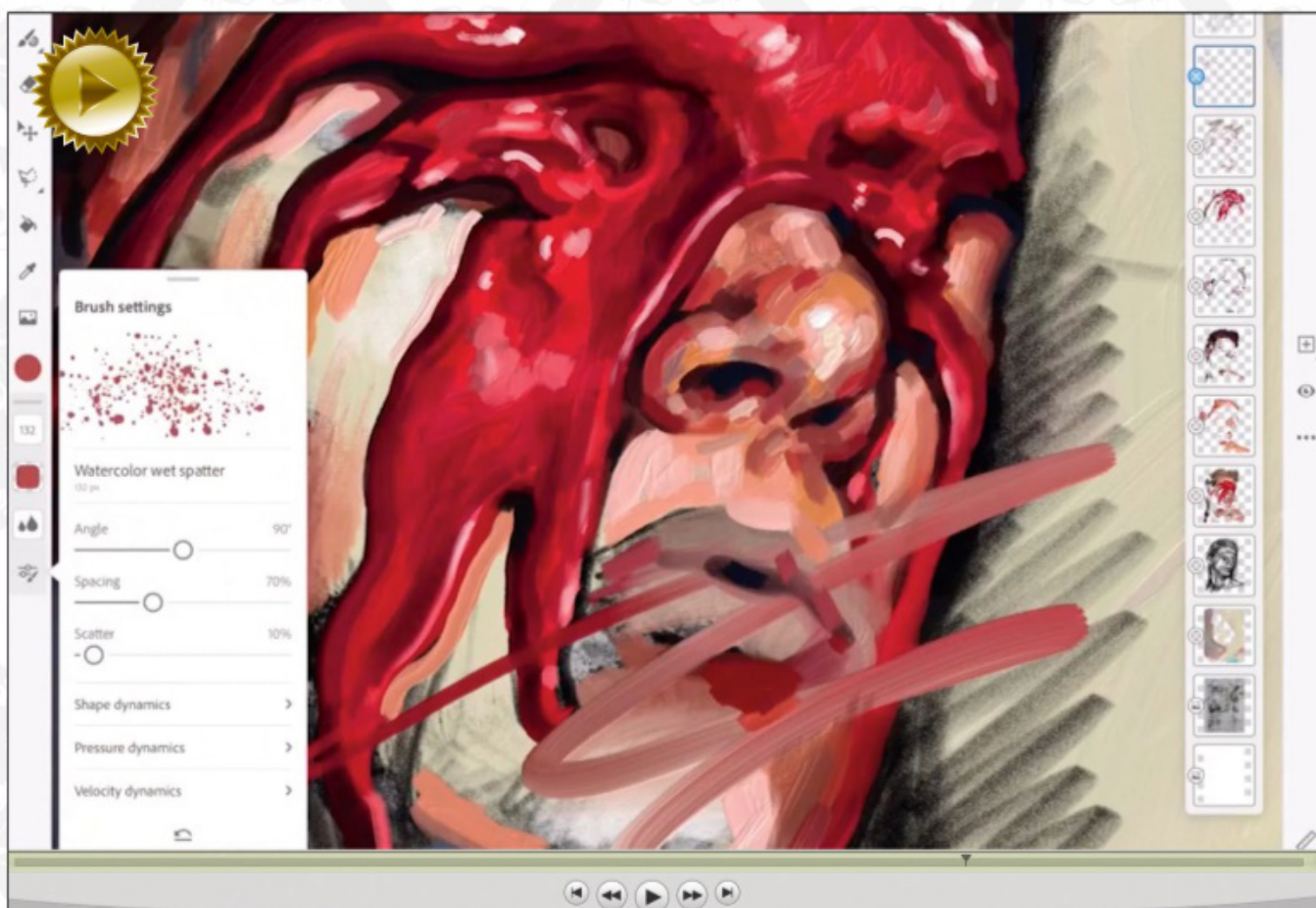
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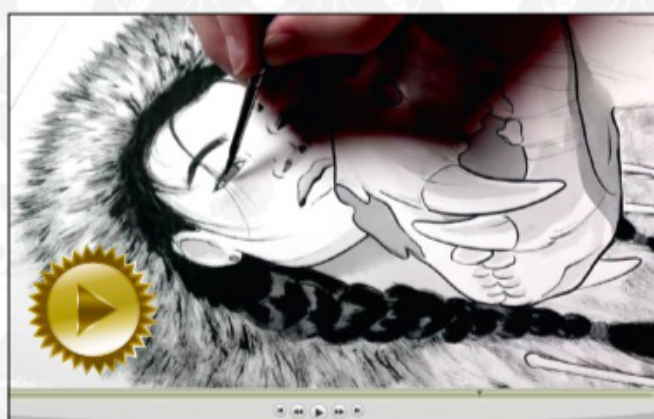
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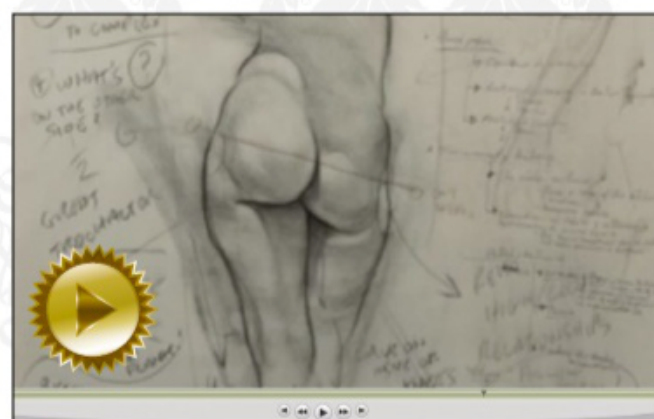
Discover new rendering techniques in Adobe Fresco

Watch as Phil Galloway explains how he's able to develop a range of textures using Adobe's latest painting app Fresco, to help bring his portrait to life. Then turn to page 78.



Create realistic textures in ink

See how traditional artist Devin Elle Kurtz works up her figure art. More on page 108.



The Female Gluteus and Hips

Watch a clip from Patrick J Jones' anatomy training video. See page 99 for our review.

PLUS 32 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

CLEAN LINE

Cover artist Ramón Nuñez uses this brush to create clean line-art in his professional work.

SOFT SPECKLED

This is Antony Ward's go-to brush for painting skin. It helps him develop a soft, grainy look.

CHARCOAL LINE

For his personal artworks Ramón likes to lay down dynamic, organic strokes with this brush.

FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



Eva Toorenent

LOCATION: The Netherlands **MEDIA:** Photoshop, watercolours, oils **WEB:** www.evatoorenent.com

Eva describes herself as an artist of the weird and the wonderful. "With my art and my stories I want to blur the lines between our world and the other world."



3



1 CANDY GIRL

"An unusual little girl who has a hard candy head with her skull on show. She's as sweet as she looks."

2 IF YOU EAT ME YOU WILL DIE

"A lot of people have tried to eat this cute, chubby plant over the years. However, none of them were successful."

3 THE CURIOUS CREATURES OF ELSWOUT

"These unusual friends are living in a symbiotic relationship with each other. The one cannot live without the other."



4 A WINTER WALK

"Els and Wout walking in a winter wonderland."





Regenass Art

LOCATION: Switzerland **MEDIA:** Photoshop, pencil **WEB:** www.regenassart.carbonmade.com

Sisters Murielle and Karin Regenass work under the artistic name Regenass Art. Their drawings respond to the world around them and life experiences, as well as interweaving fantastical tales and characters.

1



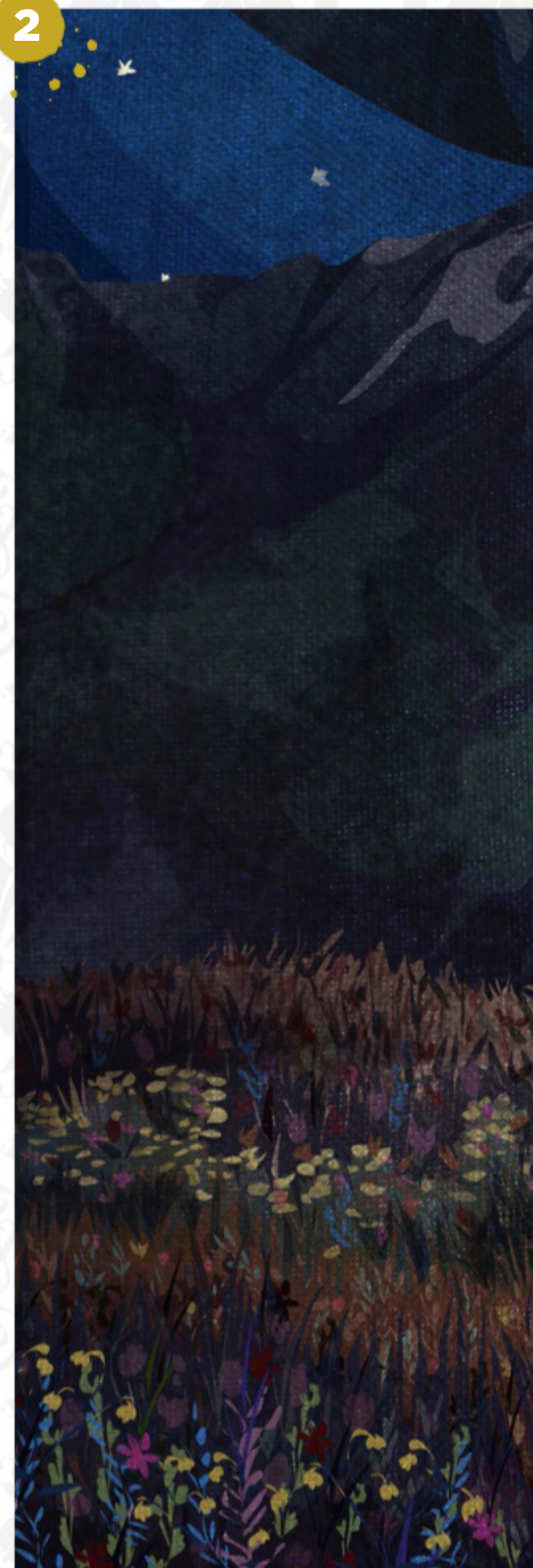
1 THE NIGHTMARE

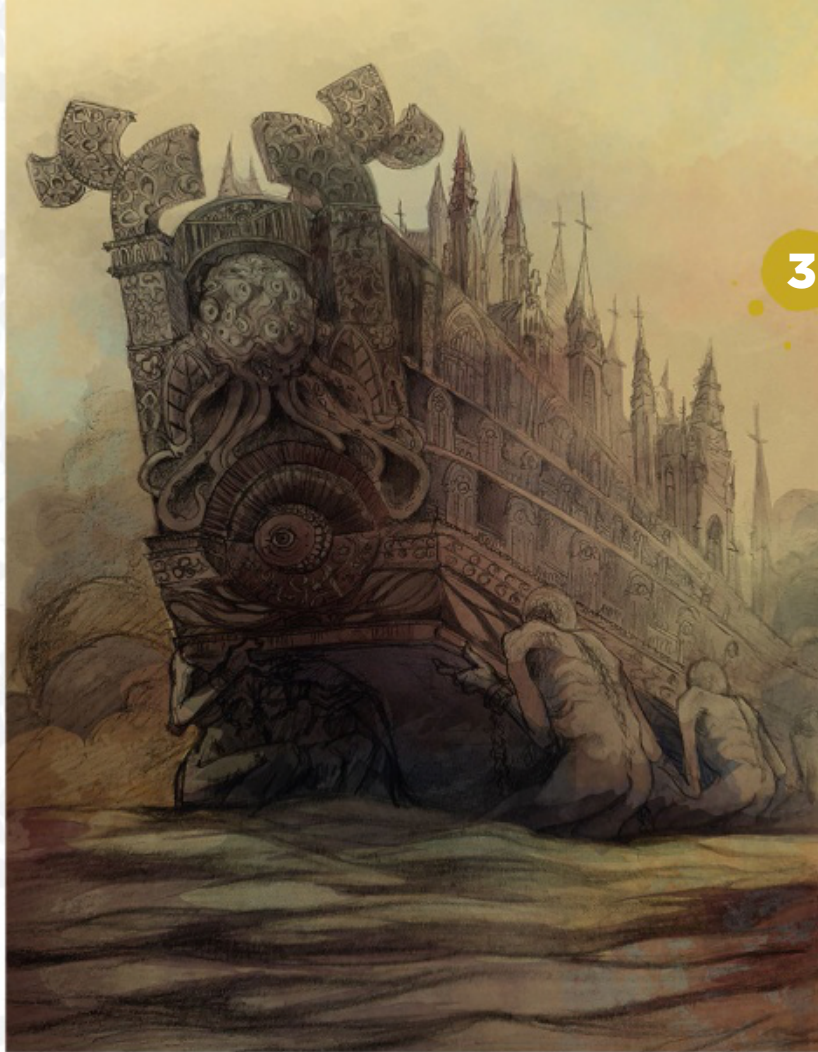
"Is this a terrifying dream or a peek beyond the veil? The dark and macabre fascinates us."

2 STERN DIEB

"The thief of stars dressed in midnight's cloak. This is part of a book project called Tower of Raziel."

2





3



4

3 AZOTH

"This piece takes its name from Azoth, the ancient secret of transformation that contains all things within itself."

4 PORTRAIT OF A MADMAN

"This piece is about the slow and inevitable losing of your mind as you pursue the truth. This character has travelled a dark path to gain knowledge, and will pay a heavy price."





Lee Wern Szuen

LOCATION: Malaysia **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Illustrator **WEB:** www.artstation.com/wernszuen

Lee started out as a self-taught artist before studying concept art at Teesside University. Now he works as a freelance concept artist and illustrator while he looks to join a studio.

1



1 YAZUROS

"My poster boy for my final year project back in university, a fan-made DLC of Monster Hunter: World. Exploring how to make a dragon not look too typical was fun. I gave it a jumonji yari trident as a tail to play into that Japanese aesthetic."

2 RIA

"More concept art and illustrations for one of my characters from my final year project. She will be a companion for the protagonist in this DLC."

3 LEONIDERS

"This was inspired by Hideo Kojima's Ludens. I dug deep into the story that it was based on, Noon Universe by the Strugatsky brothers, because it featured several races of aliens."

4 KEBURI

"Also part of my final year project, this monster mixes vibes from Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice and Dark Souls."

2







Álvaro Fernández

LOCATION: Spain **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Blender **WEB:** www.artstation.com/alvaro347

Álvaro is an engineer by trade but has always had a passion for art. "I've been drawing everything around me all my life, that's why I decided to study concept design."

1



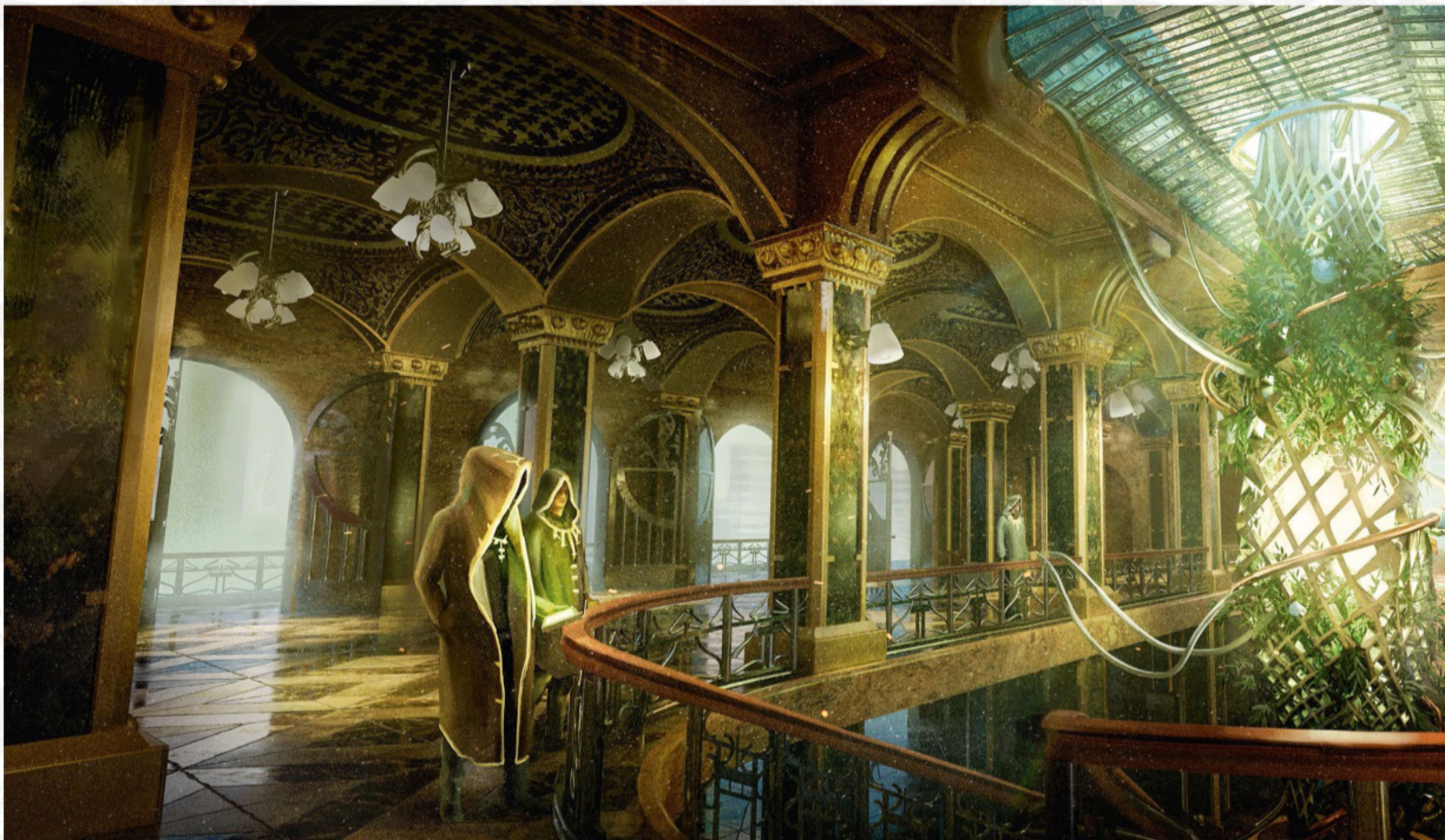
1 KITCHEN LABORATORY

"This is a traditional Cuban house interior converted into a weapons laboratory. Messiness helps to tell a story about the place."

2 CATHEDRAL SQUARE

"Inspired by the distinctive Spanish colonial architecture in Cuba, it shows what a day in the 1950s would look like."

2





3



4

3 SOLAR PUNK

"The sun and solar energy are priorities in our lives. Architecture and clothing are part of the idea that the sun is the ultimate source of energy."

4 OUTSKIRTS HOUSE

"Outside Havana the houses have a different look to those in the city. I started in 3D to help with the perspective and proportions, then draw and painted on top."



Jonathan Munro

LOCATION: Australia **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Illustrator, SketchUp, Procreate **WEB:** www.jonathanmunroart.com

After 10 years working as an auditor, Jonathan changed career and is now a freelance illustrator and concept artist. "I love working in a range of styles and the games industry lets me embrace this completely!"



1 TAVERN ARMWRESTLE

"I've been keen to get out of my comfort zone with my illustrations and tried to use a more dynamic composition with this recent commission."

2 ICE SWORD

"With this piece I started to see my work go in a new direction, thanks to some great feedback from Clint Cearley in one of his monthly challenges."

3 VICIOUS MOCKERY

"Meet Sid Burns, son of Arth Burns. Sometimes an idea for a silly name and backstory for your D&D character can spark creativity."

4 STAR TREK

"I don't get the time to do a lot of fan art, so I enjoyed trying to capture the likenesses of all the characters here."





"Being active in the community and working on small passion projects is really useful for finding work," says Shayleen Hulbert.

"In the 80s there were scores of magazines, so finding work was easy. That's no longer true," says Peter de Sève.



How to win at failure

Growing pains Mistakes and rejections are an essential part of developing as an artist, explains **Tom May**

Are you struggling to develop your career as an artist? Well, you're not alone. Pretty much every successful artist goes through tough times, particularly at the start of their career.

Take Eisner-winning illustrator and comic artist **Jen Bartel**. "Art school



ingrained in me that I needed to get editorial jobs, which my work has never really been an obvious fit for," she says.

"So I spent nearly six years post-graduation spinning my wheels, trying to make a portfolio that would get me hired." Only when she gave up and

started to draw for fun again, did things turn around. "Folks can always tell when an artist is 'faking it,'" she says. "By allowing myself to draw for fun, I think my authentic voice started to shine through, and people could tell I was having a good time."

3D character artist **Shayleen Hulbert** went through a similar



experience. One year after graduating, disheartened by "a graveyard of job applications", she gave up on art and looked into retraining as a bar manager. "I felt like a huge failure," she says. "I'd got pretty



ROOM WITH A VIEW

Nicole Gustafsson's home studio looks out on to a glorious countryside vista – apt, since a lot of her artwork is influenced by the natural world. **Page 26**



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WRITE IN TO IMAGINEFX!

Is there a particular art issue that's been bugging you? Then get it off your chest by contacting us. We love hearing from our readers! **Page 33**



average grades and my friends had all found work at this point, so it was hard not to feel chewed up by the whole experience.”

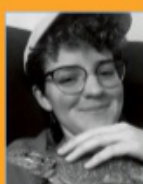
BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACES

Thankfully, an art job came to her through LinkedIn and revived her career. And Shayleen's advice is this: “People who get the golden ticket to their dream studio the second they walk out of university doors aren't the

“To succeed, I had to put in the time, but more importantly, start being honest in my work,” says Jen Bartel.

standard; it's okay if it takes a little longer to achieve your goals. Getting work is down to the right place and right time. You just need to make sure you're in all the right places, offline and online... so all that's left is time.”

Artist and illustrator **Tessa Mag**



agrees. “Not one artist can say they've never been rejected for a job or commission,” she points out. “Gigs can take a ➡➡

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

PETER DE SEVE

The artist on mistakes, rejection and coping with tough times...

Did you make any mistakes at the start of your career?

I made mistakes all the time, and chief among them was procrastination. It was incredibly hard for me to sit down at the board and actually do the work – and when I did, it was all too often an all-nighter. I did this for years and let me tell you, I don't recommend it.

I'm now a big believer in the 8am to 6pm workday and it's made my life much easier having those parameters.

What are your tips for when the going gets tough?

Creative blocks and bad drawing days come with the territory, but it's important to remember why you're in this field. Speaking for myself, I've always been a huge fan of illustration, both collecting and creating it, and there's nothing else on earth I would rather be doing. So when you're down in the dumps, try to remember the times you got it right and how that felt. It's worth fighting for.

Is rejection always bad?

It's not always a negative thing to be rejected for a job. It can be painful, humiliating and frustrating, but when it does happen it's often for a good reason. You weren't quite the right fit for the job, or your concept didn't quite nail the solution. This is something to get used to, because you'll run into it many times over the course of your career.



Peter's created covers for The New Yorker, and worked on animated films including A Bug's Life and Finding Nemo.

www.peterdeseve.com



➡ while to get. I started posting art online in 2008 and it took four years to get my first commission. The hard truth is they're not something you're entitled to as an artist." Such times can be tough, but are essential training for the future. Because mistakes and



rejection will face you – not just at the start, but throughout your career.

Illustrator and animation artist **Peter de Sève**, for

example, is celebrated for his covers for The New Yorker and work on films like Finding Nemo and Ice Age, but that doesn't mean everything always goes his way. "I've submitted cover ideas I thought were brilliant, only to have them shot down," he says.

"Months later I've run across the same drawing and wondered, 'What the hell was I thinking?' Conversely, sometimes you do get it right and they just don't see it. In that instance, I'll take the

"Much like luck, success will come more frequently if you put in the work and effort," says Dave Repoza.

"Your journey is your own, and can't be compared to that of others," says Shayleen.

piece to finish and post it myself: success is the best revenge!"

If you find rejection difficult, though, it can have dire consequences. Tessa recalls a time when she was so afraid of failure, she wouldn't do the job at all. "Overcoming this is a matter of putting faith in yourself, your work and the client's decision to choose you," she says. "Remind yourself about what you enjoy about the work; and if you don't, find ways of working that you find engaging. Put your best work in an inspiration folder to remind yourself what you're capable of."

When it's handled well, though, rejection can be a positive thing. "You just need to take the time to analyse why you've been rejected," says Jen. "That's why feedback from editors or peers is always so important. Even though it can sting, it helps you figure out how to pivot your career in a more big-picture sense, and that's hugely valuable."

ACCEPT YOUR MISTAKES

Along with rejection, mistakes are also something you're unlikely to ever



escape. In fact, according to concept and comic artist **Dave Repoza**, they're the inevitable side-product of taking risks ➡



"Were there ever times I felt like giving up? What time is it?" jokes Peter de Sève.



"It's pretty much illogical to anguish over not getting a job," believes Kimonas Theodossiou.



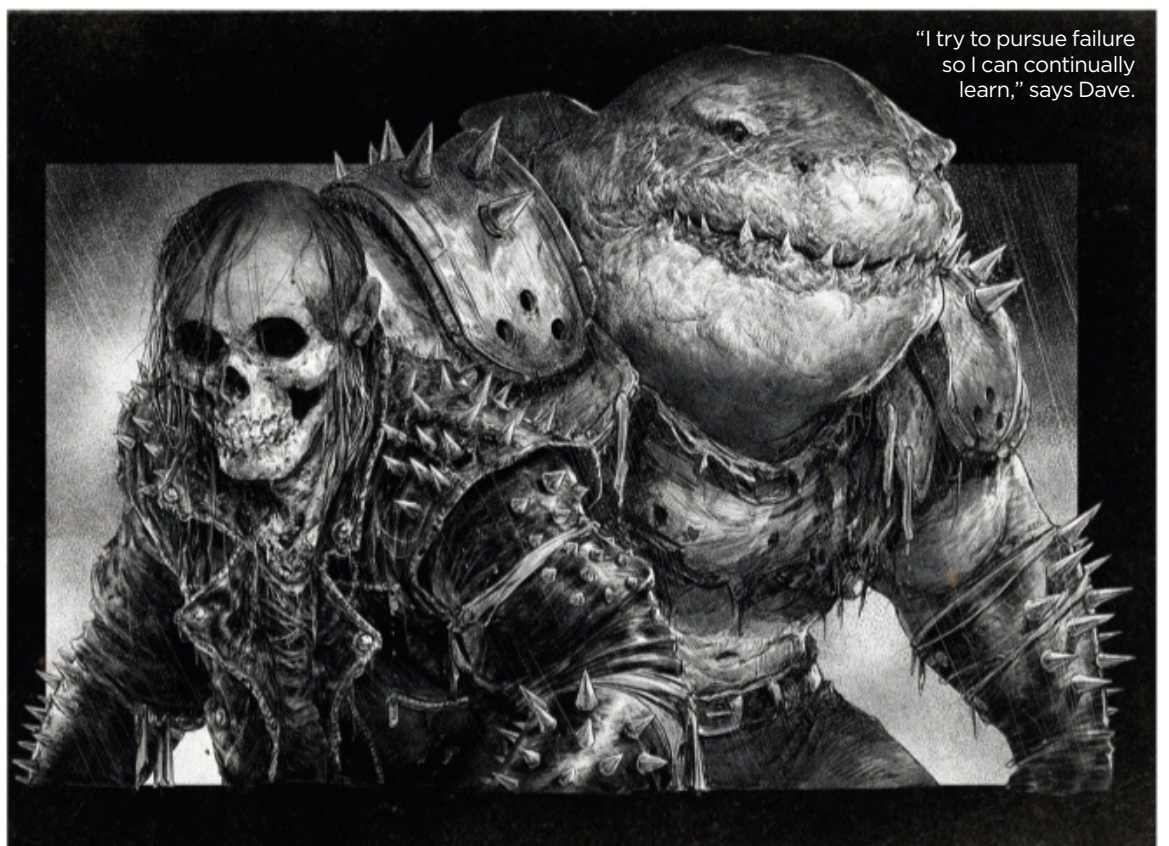
“You just need to take the time to analyse why you’ve been rejected”

"There were many times, back before 2016, when I'd take one or two months off from drawing," says Jen.



© Marvel

"I try to pursue failure so I can continually learn," says Dave.





"Some things just aren't in our power. But what is, is to strive to improve our work," says Kimonas.

➡ and pushing your art forward. "I'd consider failure a daily occurrence," he says. "Remember that everything you first attempt will likely fall relatively short of your goal. Everyone starts from a place of ignorance and learns through experience."

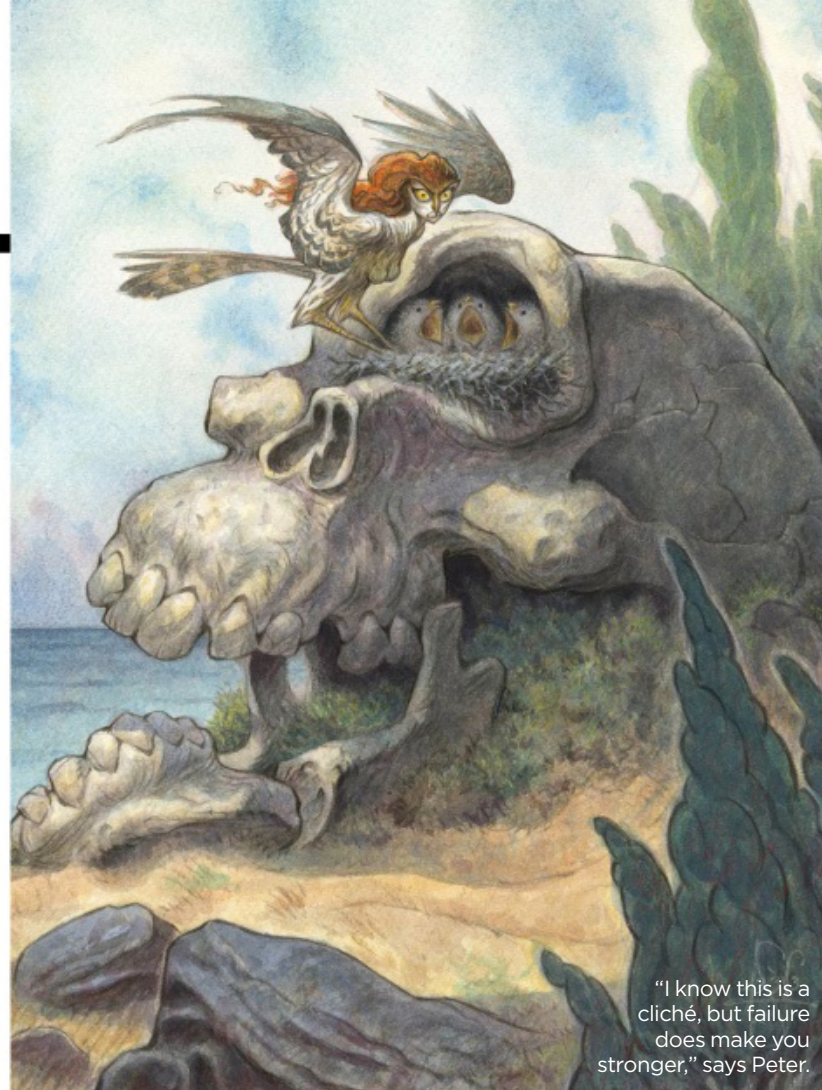
Dave gives the example of when he switched from painting to drawing. "Lots of my followers weren't too into it; I got a lot of messages asking me to switch back," he recalls. "But I knew that however bad my drawings were, I had to focus on failing in this way, over and over, until I had a strong foundation to my skill."

“Sure, it sucks to fail, but when you start using it as a tool to learn, it can become the gateway to success”

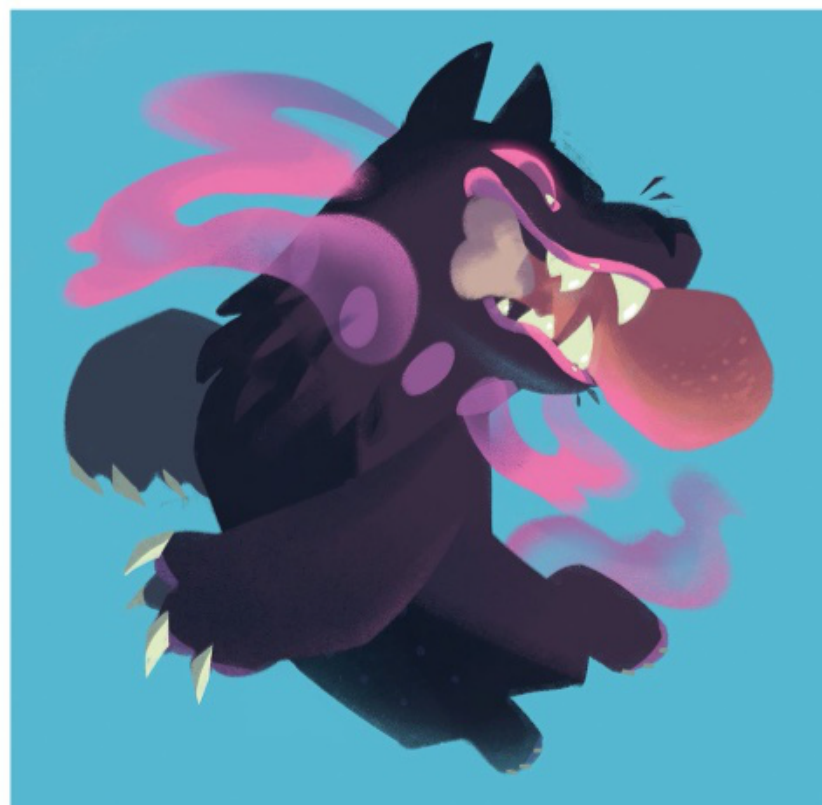
"Just because you're trying something and aren't successful yet, doesn't make you a failure. Be proud of yourself for taking the risk to fail, and push yourself to be better."

IDENTIFY KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Fantasy illustrator **Kimonas Theodossiou**, who was once so demoralised that he stopped painting for three months, agrees with Dave's approach. "It's important to learn to embrace failure," he argues. "Learning is most effective after realising a



"I know this is a cliché, but failure does make you stronger," says Peter.



"You need to remind yourself that not being hired doesn't determine your worth," says Tessa.

knowledge gap or skill gap exists. This is how failure can speak to us. Sure, it sucks to fail, but when you start using it as a tool to learn, it can become the gateway to success. How can we make the biggest improvements in our art? By grabbing the bull by the horns and tackling our biggest weaknesses. This is part of the journey every successful artist has gone through."

And frankly, the alternative doesn't bear thinking about. "To my mind, the biggest risk of all is staying comfortable," says Dave. "This can lead to a lack of growth, lack of positive stress that pushes you to new heights, and in the end, great regret later in life." The key takeaway here is that mistakes, rejections and even total disasters can lead you to learn more about yourself and ultimately open up new avenues to better things. ●



"Even when I got my first job I wasn't happy; it took two-and-a-half years to get there," says Shayleen.



"If you stick to a schedule, growth will happen naturally over time, even if it hurts to do so," says Dave.



"Comparing my current work to work from a decade ago cheers me up on tough days," says Kimonas.



Nicole Gustafsson

Colourful collections This traditional painter loves to surround herself with inspiring artwork, plants and collections



I first fell in love with the space that would become my studio when my partner and I first toured the house several years ago. Originally a dining room, the large windows provided wonderful natural light that I was seeking in a dream studio space.

Over the next six years, the room has become a painting studio, giclée printing space, storage and order fulfilment area for my online shop. I learned early on that being organised helps me feel peaceful and productive, while plants and artwork I've collected help me to feel inspired. Resin toys, sculptures, herbs from our garden, ➡

Nature influences most of my artwork, whether through realism or more fantastical ideas.

I'm always losing my box of business cards, so I finally found a tray to keep them organised and easy to find when I need one.

My studio faces north and looks out over our cherry trees and rhododendron bushes. I love the springtime when all the flowers are in bloom.

I love visiting the Oregon and Washington coast and picking up small rocks and shells. Glass floats often appear in my art as lights or in the background.



Artist news, software & events

My painting desk has an adjustable angle which I can have flat to cut prints on, or full tilt when I'm painting.

The hanging light is leftover from when this was a dining space. I haven't gotten around to changing it out for a better studio light

My printers range from a giclée printer for my fine art prints, to thermal printers that make shipping labels a breeze.

My studio is filled with art I've gathered over the years. The large cat was a character from Tiny Kitten Teeth painted by Becky Dreistadt.



ImagineNation Artist in Residence

Here I am painting at an angle desk with an easel for more support. Anything that might be tempted to roll off the bottom gets taped down.

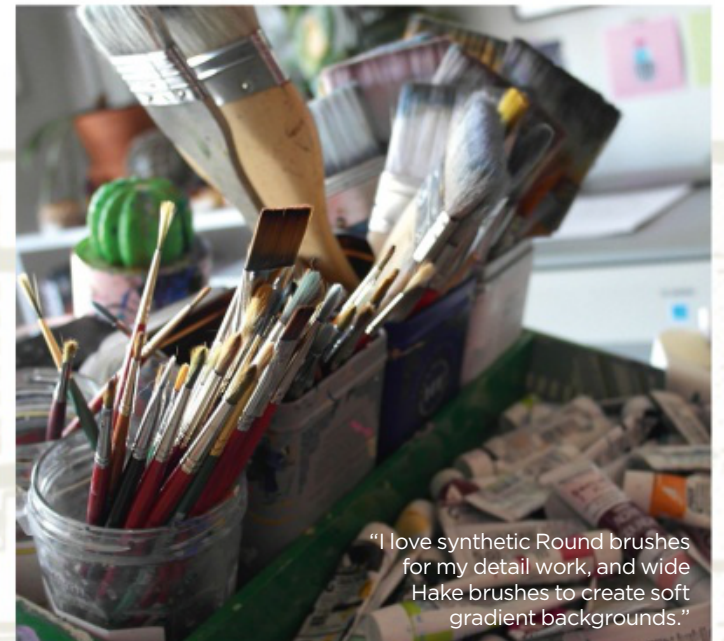


“Starting the morning with yoga stretches with my cat Kit has become a regular practice”

Artist news, software & events



Prints, sleeves, backing board as well as a greeting card inventory are all stored in my studio for easy access. Supplies that I use frequently are also kept here, close to hand.



"I love synthetic Round brushes for my detail work, and wide Hake brushes to create soft gradient backgrounds."



Small shelves throughout the studio are perfect to hold treasures I've collected over the years. Everything from bells found at vintage shops to artwork by contemporary artists.

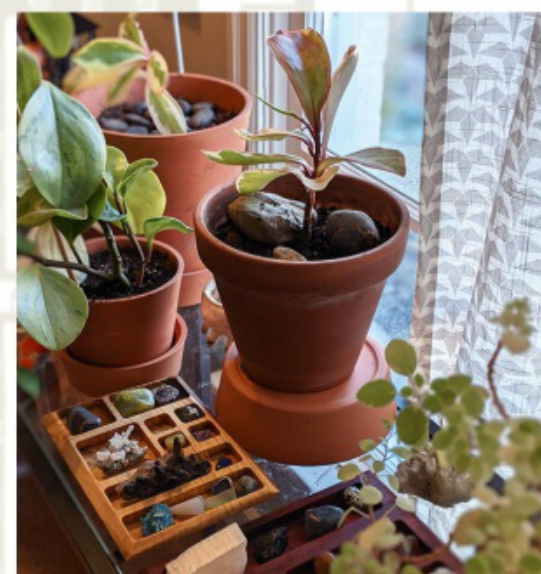
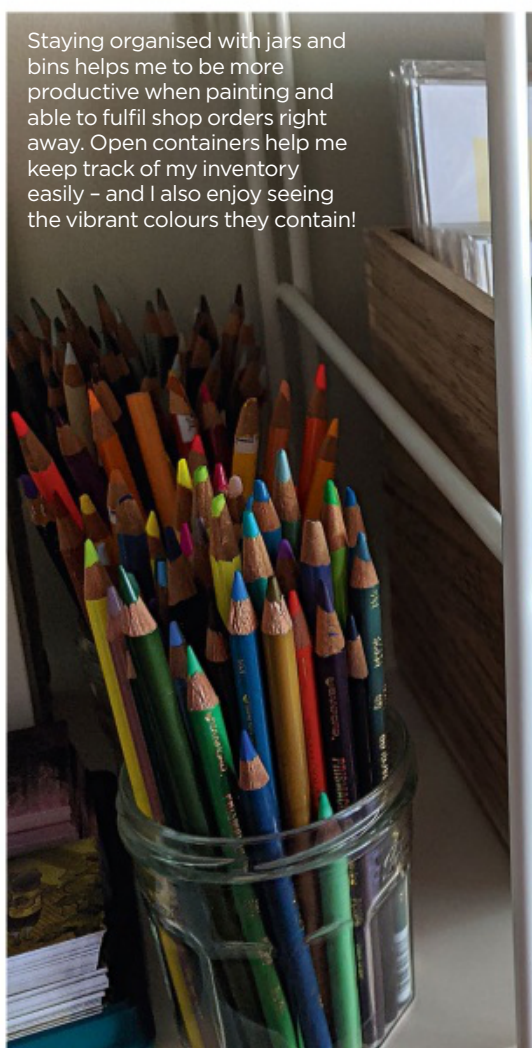


I enjoy creating artwork that revolves around socialising. Frequently, animal characters will have family around or be meeting someone.

I love surrounding my studio with colourful artwork from friends and to bring some of the outdoors in with green plants.

ImagineNation Artist in Residence

Staying organised with jars and bins helps me to be more productive when painting and able to fulfil shop orders right away. Open containers help me keep track of my inventory easily – and I also enjoy seeing the vibrant colours they contain!



I started collecting rocks when I was a kid and still love to pick up a special rock or mineral. My partner Galdre Craft made the wooden apothecary trays to help me organise my collection.

➡ and my rock collection have all found homes in my studio and continue to motivate me as an artist. Nature has always influenced my artwork and so I love to surround myself with artefacts and treasures from the outdoors.

BEING HEALTH CONSCIOUS

I found my best time to work was in the mornings after coffee and stretches. Starting the morning with yoga stretches with my cat Kit has become a regular practice to help improve my health as a working artist. It's tempting to want to jump into painting right away, but it's important to take care of your body too!

I usually paint for a couple of hours in the morning while the light is best. During the afternoons I pack orders for my online shop and run to the post office for deliveries. Being a small business, I also take time throughout the day to maintain my online shop, update social media and check in with clients. Afternoons are also perfect time to take a break: naps, a relaxing bath or time with our dogs is a great way to reset my focus. In the evenings



My cats have become my studio mates and keep me company throughout the day. While having a cat that loves to eat paper can be problematic as an artist, I enjoy their spirit and companionship.

I like to sketch or work on drawings that don't require colour work. By doing my sketching at night, I can have my ideas all ready to go for painting in the morning.

While I'm working, I love to listen to podcasts or have TV shows playing in the background. I find that my focus is better when I have something to listen to. However, the side effect of this is when I'm finished with a painting, I tend to remember what was playing while I was working. Even years after a painting is finished, I still retain the auditory memory and feeling of the show I was listening to, which can be awkward when you're painting cute animals adventuring while listening to a true crime podcast.

The paintings of US-based Nicole feature themes of adventure and exploration of our natural world. You can see more of her work at www.nimasprout.com.



“ I usually paint for a couple of hours in the morning while the light is best ”

Artist news, software & events



Creating space in a painting is a lot like maintaining a happy studio. Have everything you need close at hand and add plants.



My favourite paint to use is Holbein Acryla Gouache because of its saturated colour and smooth texture.

My computer is hooked up to a printer, scanner, label makers and more.

These items are relatively lacklustre in their functionality, so I try to surround every other available space with colourful artwork.



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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



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Instant subscriber!

My name's Lucia, and I'm writing from Barcelona, Spain. I work in a newspaper store and one day I came across your magazine. It was the first time I had seen a magazine that talked about digital art and artists. I've been drawing since I was 16 and I had never found a magazine like this. I was so happy!

Once I read the issue I went online and set up my subscription. I love the artists who appear in the Residence section and all the illustrations published on the FXPosé pages. The tips that you share with readers help me a lot as I steadily improve as a digital artist.

I was wondering if you knew about a program called Clip Studio Paint and whether it's possible for you to share some tips about this software. I'm absolutely terrible at using Photoshop so I usually use Paint Tool SAI or other types of painting software.

Lucia, via email

Claire replies Lucia, I'm so glad that you found us! We've been around for a while, but we still get artists discovering



DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?
Don't worry – you can get hold of it at <https://ifxm.ag/buyissue183>

Our regular Artist in Residence feature resonates with reader Lucia – and editor Claire!



Clip Studio Paint is well suited to creating comic panels and manga art, as Steve Ellis showed back in issue 174.

us for the first time. It's always good to hear. I also love our FXPosé and Artist in Residence features. As for Clip Studio Paint, we actually have a workshop on this very subject next issue. It's in our manga issue, which is on sale 21 February. I hope you enjoy it.

Thanks for your honesty

Hi Claire! I was impressed by your editorial in 2019's Christmas edition (issue 181). The way you expressed yourself, speaking about yourself and your feelings. I admire you! Bravo!

I want to thank you for all your work on ImagineFX. I've been a subscriber since issue number one, and I'm always smiling when I start reading a new edition. I don't know if all the readers realise the importance of your efforts and all the time you spend on each issue! Keep up the good work!

Donald Lachance, via email

Claire replies Thank you for your kind words, Donald. It really is much appreciated. For those who didn't see it, I talked about how I've got back into going to events after a period of hiding away. I did receive a few emails from people who really related to it.

Special editions please

Just wanted to drop a note and say that I've been a fan of ImagineFX publications for some time and especially the Sketchbook series! They aren't as easy to find in Arizona as I'd like, but I always pick them up when I can, and I appreciate all the talent and inspiration I get from the artists' work and the articles.

Mark Sequeira, via email

Claire replies Hello Mark, thanks for your interest in our publication. It's always good to get feedback on what people are into. We don't have any new editions in the pipeline just yet, but there are always a few special issues over at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk.



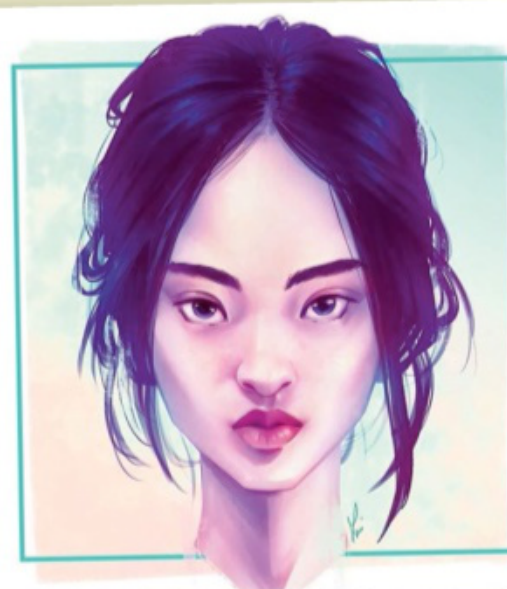
New works that have grabbed our attention



Daniel Dana Art
[@daniel_dana_art](https://www.instagram.com/daniel_dana_art)



James Hayball Arts
[@jameshayballart](https://www.instagram.com/jameshayballart)



Małgorzata Kmiec
[@mkkmiec.art](https://www.instagram.com/mkkmiec.art)

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, and use the hashtag #imaginefx

Interview

JOURNEY

"The cover of The Art of Heikala describes my works - a magical girl on her way to adventures ahead, accompanied by wildlife and beautiful nature."



ARTIST PORTFOLIO

HEIKALA

The story behind the picture: **Gary Evans** meets the Finnish illustrator who is as enigmatic as her art

Heikala wants her art to be a glimpse into the life of a character, a little moment in a larger story. You see it in her illustration of the solitary cloaked figure walking in the snowy wilderness accompanied by a tiger, the girl and her cat staring at a meteor shower at night, the witch who appears to be migrating with a flock of birds.

To get to these glimpses, these little moments, the Finnish illustrator often finds herself throwing around some unusual thoughts.

"If witches travel abroad, do they use aeroplanes or do they fly across continents on their brooms? Do they need passports? Do witches have to go through customs and declare their potion-making equipment? I like to play around with these things in my head and sometimes the ideas become nice paintings where the viewer can figure out the story behind the picture." ➤

Interview

OFFERING

"Inspired by the shrines I saw in Japan, I painted a girl presenting the cat-god of sorts with a fish offering."



➡ Heikala lives in a large house in Oulu, Finland. She has a whole room to handle stock and postage for the online shop she started straight out of university and has since built into a very successful small business. In the corner of her workspace, the house's former living room, she keeps equipment for making and editing the videos that have helped her earn nearly two million followers on social media. Her desk stands in the same room, under the big window that lets in lots of light, and here she keeps the pens, paper, brushes and coloured inks used to give her illustrations that distinctive look – tools she'll soon release as part of her own range of art supplies.

This makes Heikala sound entrepreneurial, influencing, hustling. But she describes Oulu as a good place

SHELTER

"The person here is offering shelter from the rain to a stray cat."



“I didn't have to worry about getting a job to support myself during the studies”

for an introvert. She doesn't disclose her full name and never posts photos of herself. The story behind this requires a bit more figuring out.

Maybe the answer lies in the bottom of two drawers of the drawer unit beside her desk under the big window. It's here that Heikala keeps her most prized possessions.

GOING IT ALONE

Heikala was always drawing. It was animals when she was very young, then Pokémon arrived in Finland and for years her sketchbooks were full of Bulbasaur and Charmanders. At school, she had an art teacher who encouraged her to experiment with a range of materials and techniques. She sculpted. She got into oils. In the early 2000s, manga appeared on magazine stands in her hometown Oulu, so Heikala advanced to sketching humans in the style of Japanese comics such as Ranma ½.

Artist PROFILE

Heikala

LOCATION: Finland

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Yoshitaka Amano, Zao Dao, Tove Jansson, Jun Kumaori and Malbeni.

MEDIA: Ballpoint, brush pen, coloured inks, Procreate and Photoshop.

WEB: www.heikala.com

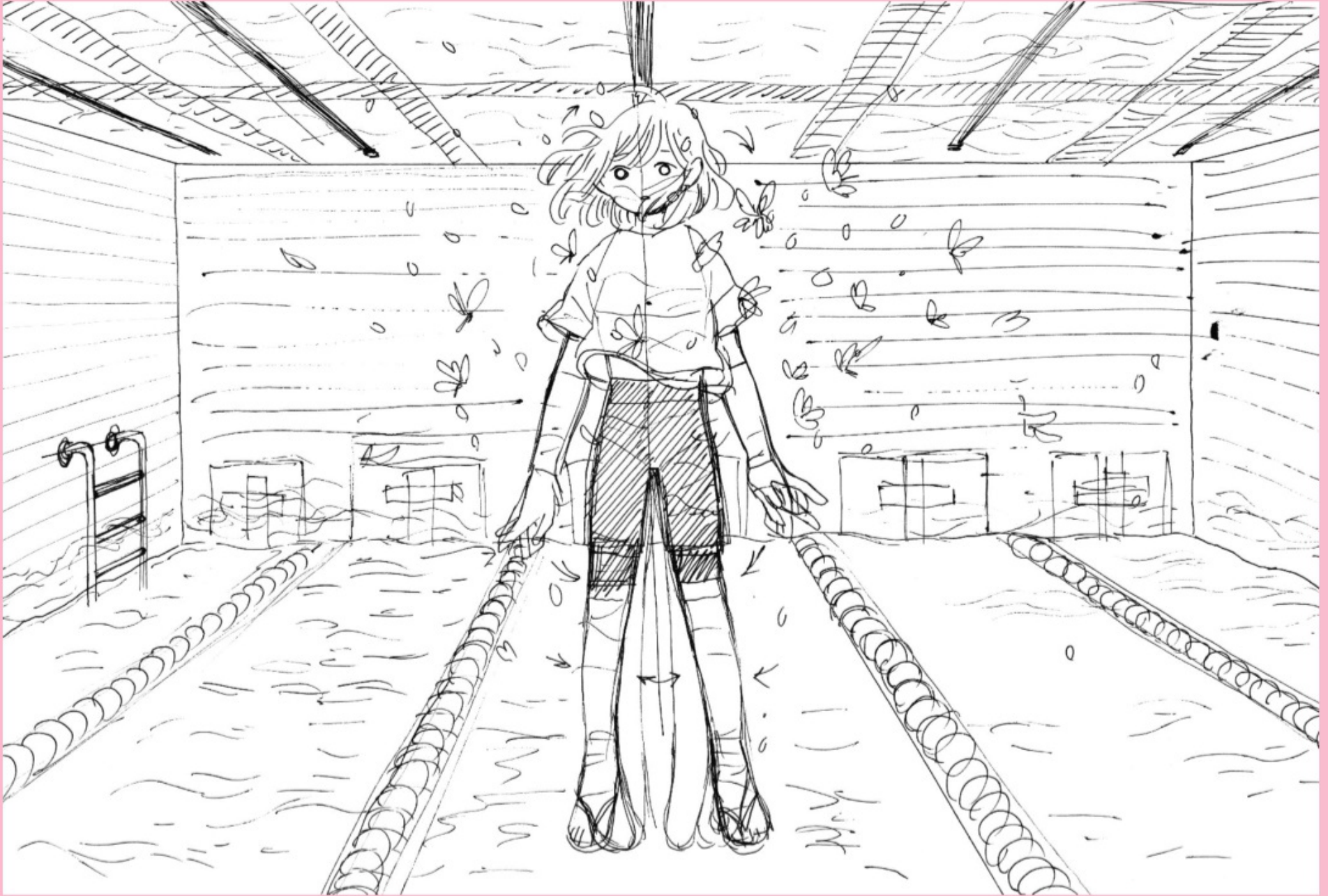
At 16, she was accepted into a high school specialising in art in Helsinki, a six-hour train ride away, which meant leaving home. Her parents were always very encouraging and so, after high school, she went on to university in Lahti. It was on the five-year graphic design course that she first learned about the importance of branding, product design and visual storytelling.

These days, Heikala does the odd bit of illustration work for clients, but only if it comes with complete creative control. Still at uni, she started going to conventions, to artist alley, where her artwork sold surprisingly well. This meant she was torn between getting a job at a graphic design studio or trying to make a living from her own art. She tried freelance graphic design, but learned pretty quickly it wasn't for ➡



CHILD

"I made this piece earlier this year during the annual Inktober challenge."



ECHOES

"I struggled with the pose and proportions of the character, and whenever that happens I scan the sketch and make final adjustments digitally by resizing/skewing."

PLACES

"Here's a collection of quick three- and five-minute sketches of some environments."



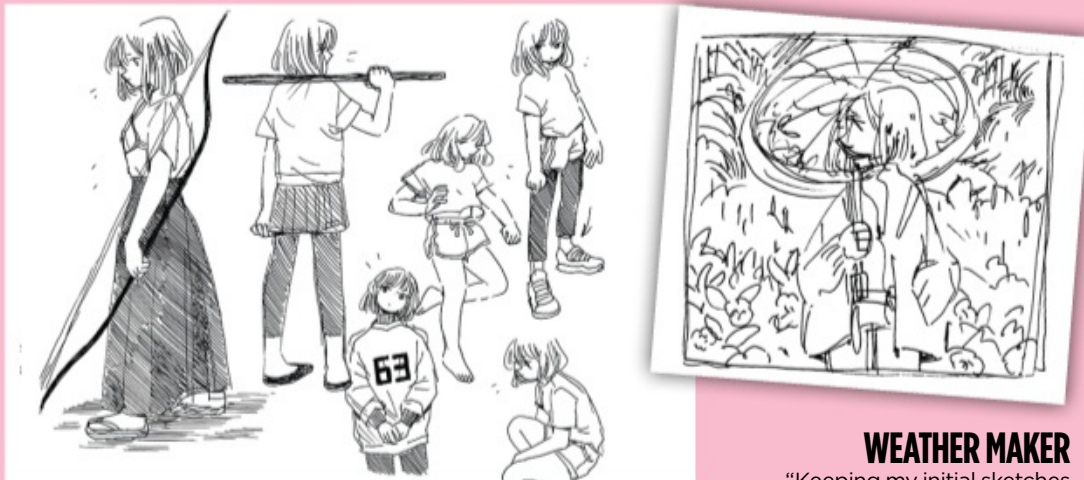
DON'T GET HUNG UP ON DETAILS

Heikala explains why she sketches fast and small - and never uses an eraser...

"Whenever I sketch, I always use a pen or a ballpoint pen. I made a decision maybe six years ago to not use an eraser at all when sketching. This has streamlined my process and helped me to not get hung up on details during the sketching stage, and to work around my mistakes rather than erasing my process."

I start off by drawing in my sketchbook. I use either Deleter or Muji sketchbooks, and I like to sketch on slightly textured paper. For some reason, I prefer sketching on a horizontal page rather than vertical - I don't quite know why that is. I somehow feel restricted when there's too little space horizontally, which is why I mainly use spiral-bound sketchbooks, so I have the freedom to sketch across the page. But I end up flipping my sketchbook upside down on every other page so I don't have to rest my hand on the spiral.

I always sketch really small. My average sketch for a painting idea is usually matchbox-sized and it only has the bare essential components for a composition. I scan the tiny sketch and print it out in bigger size, and then start to work on the smaller details for the sketch. When I'm happy with everything I trace the sketch on to watercolour paper and start working on the line-art and then start adding colours."



QUICK POSES

"Sketches of people and poses from some photo reference."

WEATHER MAKER

"Keeping my initial sketches rough helps me flesh out the composition of a piece without getting caught up in details."

Interview



WEATHER MAKER

"A painting where I wanted to create a sense of magic with a mundane object like an umbrella."



SUBMERGED

"This is one of my personal favourite pieces and I like the atmosphere here."

➤ her. After graduating, she started building her own business: "Thanks to the free education system in Finland I didn't have to worry about getting a job to support myself during the studies, and nor did I have to take out a loan to study. I'm extremely fortunate that it all worked out."

Working for herself means she has time to experiment on her own large-scale projects, like her book published in 2019, *The Art of Heikala*, and the range of art supplies she hopes to

release in early 2020. Most of the supplies she uses herself are only available in Europe and Japan. So she spent a year contacting suppliers and putting together a range she will sell world-wide through her online shop. The aim is to encourage more people to make things with their hands.

"Since it's a project that's close to my heart, I didn't want to compromise on any aspect of it, so I decided to make this happen from start to finish by myself, but that also means that I'm

STROLL IN THE SNOW

"I really like how the snow looks in the foreground of this piece and I'd like to experiment with making snow more in the future."

taking the financial blow if it doesn't end up working out.

"Making solo projects is of course a big risk financially, but I'm at a point in my life where I want to prioritise projects with full artistic freedom over doing something that I don't have my heart in – even if it ends up being a financial failure."

HUNTING FOR INSPIRATION

Heikala doesn't wait for inspiration to find her. She goes looking for it. Often it's a numbers game: she sits down at her desk and sketches as many as 30 matchbox-sized images, but will usually develop only a few. Before that, for an idea to take shape, she has to take in a lot of visual stimulation. She looks through a ton of images on Pinterest and in her own photography.

Japan still plays big part in her art. She's visited the country seven times and is going again this year. She's also



“I think about the brand that I want to maintain for Heikala in every aspect of the things that I do”

into magic, fantasy and mythology. Finland's wealth of natural beauty increasingly influences her work, as do Finnish children's book illustrators like Rudolf Koivu and Tove Jansson.

She sketches very quickly with a pen or ballpoint pen and never erases anything. Mistake are worked around. Details aren't important just yet. The small sketch is scanned, printed large and finished with coloured inks.

THE ART OF BRANDING

"In my opinion, as a commercial artist, it's good to have skills in branding and creating a visual identity for yourself. When thinking about brands, it's not only the logo that some company has, but everything that company does.

"I think about the brand that I want to maintain for Heikala in every aspect of the things that I do: how I interact with my followers, what kind of art I want to make, the subjects I want ➡

TINY EXPEDITION

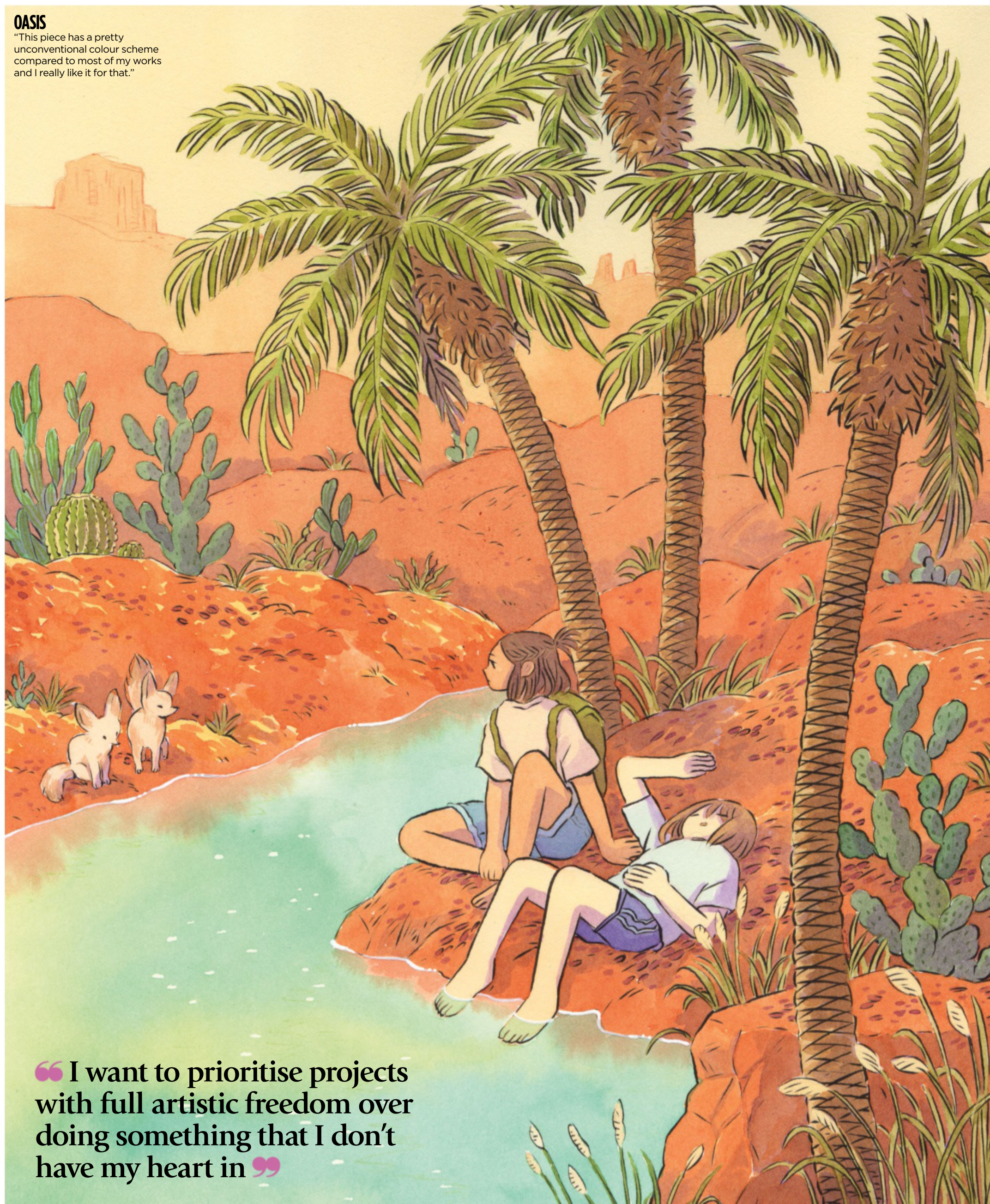
"I like exploring the idea of tiny characters in regular-sized environments."



Interview

OASIS

"This piece has a pretty unconventional colour scheme compared to most of my works and I really like it for that."



“ I want to prioritise projects with full artistic freedom over doing something that I don’t have my heart in ”



RINGED SELKIE

"A piece made during Inktober 2019, inspired by Finland's autumn season."



METEOR SHOWER

"This is another piece I created as part of last year's Inktober challenge."



FALLEN

"The ruins in this piece were inspired by the Temple of Time in Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild."

Interview



➡ to tackle in my art, what kind of products I want to create, and how I want to utilise my social media. I've made a conscious decision not to do sponsored content on my social media for whichever company, and I carefully choose the people I want to work with and make products with. Most of these things, I guess, basically come down to my own ethics."

In the same way that Heikala wants the viewer to figure out the story behind her art, she seems to want the viewer to figure out the story behind the artist who made it. She gives us glimpses into her life – little moments in her larger story – but the rest she

GATHERING

"A piece made during Inktober 2019, inspired by a photo I took on one of my trips to Japan."

GHOST MIGRATION

"This piece shows a witch guiding a herd of ghosts with a lit storm lamp."



GRANDMA'S CLOAK

"I like to add depth to my art by choosing a name that develops the story even further."



“I try to create art that's true to who I am. I may not always succeed, but that's something I actively strive to achieve”

keeps for herself. It's good for business. It's an excellent bit of branding. But it's much more than that. Heikala has not only solved the age-old problem of making money versus doing the thing you love to do – she's turned the solution into a story, into a work of art. And that means she's free to focus on the one thing that matters most.

PRIZED POSSESSIONS

Whenever Heikala finishes a piece, she puts it in one of the bottom two drawers of the desk unit under the big window, the place where she keeps her most prized possessions.

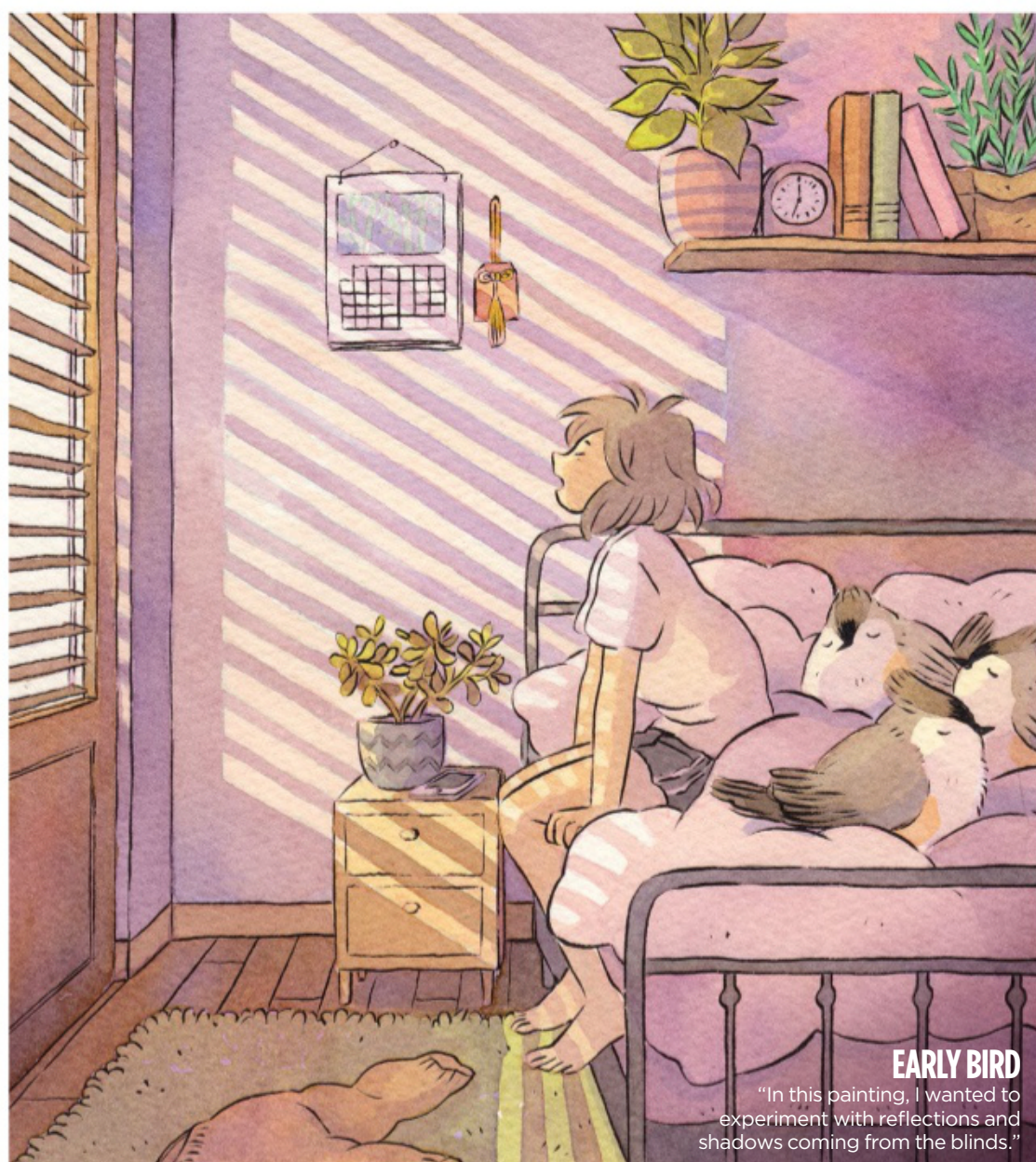
"I try to create paintings that are true to who I am. I may not always succeed, but that's something I actively strive to achieve. If those works that

are important to me speak also to the audience that views them, then I can feel happy knowing I've reached people who also feel my paintings are true to them. There's so many different kinds of art in the world, and so many different people to experience art, that I find it easy to accept that not everyone will love my art, in the same way that I don't love or understand all art. But I'm so extremely happy to have found the way I love to make art, and to have found my niche and the people who also like to view the art I make.

"Those drawers are used only to store finished originals and whenever I can slide one of those drawers open and place a new work inside I feel this huge sense of accomplishment." ●

**ECHOES**

"I made Echoes as a part of a series for a gallery show on the theme of 'places'."

**EARLY BIRD**

"In this painting, I wanted to experiment with reflections and shadows coming from the blinds."

TRUE COLOURS

Heikala fills us in on the techniques behind her distinctive colour work

"I use coloured inks in a similar manner to watercolours, but there are some key differences to these mediums. With watercolours, you need to work your way from lighter tones to darker tones and from warm tones to cold tones, otherwise colours will bleed into areas you've painted."

Coloured inks are waterproof once they're dry, so it enables me to work in any order, from dark to light, and to lay down bright tones next to one another without them bleeding. It's also easier for me to create shadows. However, working with inks is a bit more difficult. If you make a mistake, you can't lift it up like with watercolour.

I use Rohrer & Klingner coloured inks and a Pentel Pocket Brush pen, which is waterproof once dry and a good match with coloured ink. I also use a water brush filled with coloured inks to make coloured outlines. I use a porcelain palette to mix my inks then paint with varying sizes of synthetic watercolour brushes. If you want to try coloured inks, get one sheet of good-quality cotton watercolour paper, size two and four synthetic watercolour brushes, and four coloured ink bottles: cyan, magenta, yellow (medium chrome) and black. With those four colours you can create a variety of different tones."

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February 2020

Elevate your human and animal anatomy skills with the help of Oliver Sin and Aaron Blaise, and discover new brush techniques in Procreate 5. We also talk to MTG's Cynthia Sheppard and illustrator Anna Dittmann.



Issue 182

January 2020

Learn how to paint striking fantasy portraits, starting with Fatemeh Haghnejad's ethereal cover art. We interview John Burton and Djamila Knopf, and find out what successful artists have in common.



Issue 181

Christmas 2019

Video game industry pros help you to take your 2D and 3D art skills to the next level. We explore Kekai Kotaki's sketchbook, salute the world's finest concept artists, and speak to legendary art director Robh Ruppel.



Issue 180

December 2019

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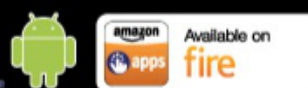
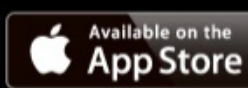


Issue 169
January 2019



Issue 168
Christmas 2018

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ARTIST PORTFOLIO

PIOTR JABŁOŃSKI

Garrick Webster talks to the Polish fantasy artist about his unique style and his work in games, publishing and film

NIGHT BIRDS

A powerful piece of concept art by Piotr Jabłoński, from the Serkonan Legends for Dishonored 2.



© Bethesda Softworks

© Wizards of the Coast

When it's time to go on a journey to the bleak, outer edges of the universe, where reality fragments into abstract dimensions, then Polish illustrator Piotr Jabłoński is the ideal tour guide. Like a gamekeeper of the grotesque, he conjures up strange, elongated beings to populate those cold and shadowy realms on the darker side of Purgatory.

Artist PROFILE

Piotr Jabłoński

LOCATION: Poland

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Frank Frazetta, Jacek Malczewski, Moebius, Alphonse Mucha, Howard Pyle, Alfred Wierusz-Kowalski,

MEDIA: Pen and ink, Photoshop, Krita

WEB: www.artstation.com/nicponim

Yet when you ask him about his highly individual style, Piotr doesn't mention winged demons, doorways to darkness or the hideous armies of the undead. For him, painting fantasy and sci-fi imagery is all about a constant passion to learn and create. "It's an evolutionary process," he explains. "My style is a mix of inspiration, mistakes and the lack of skill to do something better. The final effect is not 100 per cent what I want to achieve. It's more like I'm trying to catch the image in my head and I'm not quite good enough to turn it into an illustration."

DARK AND TWISTED WORLDS

Whatever he sees in his head must be incredible, because the artwork that he does manage to visualise is pretty amazing as it is. Many of Piotr's

“My style mixes inspiration, mistakes and the lack of skill to do something better”

depictions of dark and twisted worlds have been created for the video games industry. For example, he's painted a whole array of environments and illustrations for the Dishonored franchise, developed by Arkane Studios and published by Bethesda. Similarly, when Bungie had a book printed that fleshes out the world of Destiny, Piotr was commissioned to illustrate a series of creatures that feature in the game.

Displaying his graphical skills, he creates posters in his unique style for Poland's Camerimage festival. And ➡



CARD ART

Piotr painted the Apocalypse Demon for Magic: The Gathering.



THE DAWN PATROL

Breaking the gloom with a slightly comedic theme image, Piotr created this image for Dishonored: Death to the Outsider.



© Bethesda Softworks

➤➤ another favourite area for him is book illustration.

Early in 2019, Piotr worked on a series of five science fiction illustrations for Centipede Press when the publisher reissued *Nova*, the 1968 novel by Samuel R Delany. “Whether it’s concept art or an illustration, when you’re commissioned you have to deliver a piece of art. That’s my opinion,” says Piotr. “*Nova* is a pretty old novel, so I wanted to create illustrations with a retro vibe. I didn’t want to show too much additional detail, I just focused on the characters and the scenes. Samuel liked it, Centipede Press liked it, so I like it too.”

ARCHITECTURE BACKGROUND

Less is more is one of Piotr’s mantras and it has become part of his style thanks to his training in architecture. Born in Bialystok in eastern Poland, Piotr grew up in the nearby town of Choroszcz. When it was time to go to university, the closest thing to art offered at the Bialystok University of Technology was architecture and urban planning. Piotr enrolled on the

BIRDMAN

Creepy, abstract and weird – one of Piotr’s images for *Dishonored: Death of the Outsider*.

MOANING WALL

Artwork for *Magic: The Gathering’s* Hour of Devastation set.

DISHONOURED LEGENDS

Discover how Piotr Jabłoński’s atmospheric artworks helped flesh out the gaming world of *Dishonored*

The creepy, awe-inspiring imagery that Piotr painted for the *Dishonored* video games franchise constitutes an important milestone in his career. “What I loved most was the fact that the art director, Sébastien Mitton, let me do what I wanted, visually,” says the artist.

As well as contributing environmental artwork for the game *Dishonored 2* in 2016, Piotr also painted *Serkonan Legends*. This was a series of illustrations depicting the characters and folklore behind the world that this stealth adventure takes place in.

One of Piotr’s favourites shows a giant kraken rising above a coastal setting, bringing with it chaos and terror. “Here’s the original brief that

I received from art director Sébastien for the kraken scene: ‘One that shows a kind of giant kraken/octopus emerging from a giant hole in the sea in the vicinity of Karnaca Bay. It’s freestyle, you can offer several concepts.’ Beautiful! For me it’s really important to have freedom during the creative process,” says Piotr.

The following year, in 2017, Piotr also contributed to *Dishonored: Death of the Outsider*. Here, he painted a series of images visualising a variety of the game’s weird and haunting characters. Even more impressive are his depictions of The Void, an abstract realm within the game world where the normal laws of physics don’t apply.



© Wizards of the Coast

course, even though he wasn’t all that interested in the subjects. Although there wasn’t as much sketching and conceptual work as he would have liked, supported by his parents and friends he pushed on and completed the course in 2011. Piotr was bored with it at the time, but now when he looks back on his architectural training he appreciates what it’s lent to his art.

“I had to learn about concepts from 30 or 40 years ago; there was nothing new, interesting or innovative,” he says. “But now I look at architecture – both interior design and exteriors – and find it fantastic and inspiring. It’s taken time to fall in love with the subject. I learned a few good things for sure, like minimalism, how architecture and shapes work in open spaces, why the context of the place is so important, and how to connect large and small objects in a composition.”

Study some of Piotr’s images and this appreciation of space and form is easy to detect. He uses physical structures ➤➤

“When you’re commissioned you have to deliver a piece of art. That’s my opinion”



KRAKEN

One of the Serkonan Legends Piotr painted for the game Dishonored 2.

Interview

KNOCKER

One of Piotr's concept images for the world of Dishonored 2: Serkonan Legends.

© Bethesda Softworks



IMAGINEFX

March 2020

TOMCAT

Piotr's graffiti-inspired personal series has led to commissions.



ADDING CHARACTER

A rendering of The Eyeless Leaders – another digital painting for Dishonored: Death to the Outsider.



“I have lots of ideas and draw lots of sketches that I never finish, probably because I get bored too quickly”

➡ to help build drama in his illustrations, and depth to generate atmosphere. It can give his paintings an epic quality which is equally applicable whether he's depicting a gaming world, or the fantasy setting described in one of Michael Moorcock's Elric novels – another project that he undertook with Centipede Press.

Growing up, Piotr was always interested in drawing and painting – dinosaurs, monsters, vehicles and more. The Polish painter Zdzisław Beksiński was one of his creative heroes, alongside Frank Frazetta and Simon Bisley. Further inspired by his brother's Thorgal comics – a series

published in Belgium and created by Jean Van Hamme and Grzegorz Rosiński – he started building up his own visual language. This was followed by a teenage passion for hip hop and graffiti.

Traces of the latter are seen in Piotr's personal series Tomcat, created early in the artist's career. These fully realised paintings show the adventures of two lonely children in a decaying urban landscape, pursued by cops and accompanied by a giant white graffiti cat, which appears in various poses on the walls behind them. It's abstract, ominous and funny, all at the same time.

SPECIAL EDITION

Michael Moorcock's epic Elric series gets the Piotr treatment.

“Tomcat was a spontaneous project that has brought in jobs like the projects I've done for Arkane Studios,” says Piotr. “I don't plan to continue it. I have lots of ideas and draw lots of sketches that I never finish, probably because I get bored too quickly, or don't want to waste time on something I don't feel will be good enough.” ➡

Interview

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

Piotr depicted the Amazons for a legendary scene in Wonder Woman.



VISUALISING THE STORY OF ARES

How Piotr Jabłoński's art appeared in the 2017 blockbuster Wonder Woman

One of Piotr's most interesting projects is his contribution to the 2017 film Wonder Woman. In one scene, the young Princess Diana is shown a book depicting the Story of Ares, which opens to a fantastic animated mural. The image was assembled from the work of several artists, each of whom painted one part of the legend. Piotr's contribution is an Old Masters-style digital painting of the Amazons fighting for freedom, with Diana's mother central and raising her sword.

"It was a really complex scene, and it took several sketches to find the best composition showing all the characters while referencing classical paintings," says Piotr. "All the lines, poses, movement – everything was done consciously to show the theme in the best way and to capture the essence of the Old Masters. Many additional dynamics lines and Golden Ratio compositions were included."

In total, Piotr spent 40 days working on his section of the overall illustration, in conjunction with VFX studio Aaron Sims Creative, with art direction by Raffy Ochoa and Houston Sharp. Although it only appears for a few seconds in the film, it really is a showpiece in Piotr's portfolio.

REFEREE

Another strange, elongated character from Piotr's personal portfolio.





© Warner Bros. Pictures

➡ But personal work is important in my artistic life. It's like a laboratory, a time to experiment with new tools and different approaches. Maybe nothing will come of it, but maybe something I try now will be useful in a few months or years. It leads you on new paths, and helps you to develop a new style that you might be able to use in the future."

LESS IS MORE

One new path Piotr would like to explore is animation, and he'd also like to assemble his own art book someday. With a toddler at home, life has been hectic for Piotr lately. Returning to work after taking a three-month break, things are full-on once again and he's working on new projects. Because they're all still under NDA, he can't reveal any more about them right now, but watch this space.

Like many freelancers, Piotr puts most of his energy into the job that's in front of him. Whether it's illustration or concept art, his mission is simply to create digital art. Trends come and go quickly with all the digital tools available to artists, and one thing he's noticed is the temptation to put as



CYANA

One of Piotr's celebrated images for the new edition of Nova by US writer Samuel R. Delany.

“The most important thing is the illustration and the satisfaction I get from creating it”

© Centipede Press

much 'wow factor' as possible into every image. His approach is quite the opposite. "For me it's more important to know what elements to remove from your illustrations to make them better. Less is more, in almost every situation," he says.

Piotr continues: "When I started my adventure in digital painting, my dream was to work in the film industry – make concepts for movies and so on. Today, things have changed a bit. I still

have that ambition, but it's not my main goal. The most important thing for me is the illustration and the satisfaction I get from creating it. I just want to make an image that I'll be happy with.

"Of course, it's a perfect deal when big ideas and illustrations come together on projects for big studios. It's a win-win situation. But today I'm grown up enough to say 'no' if I don't feel good about a project." ●

Nikolay Georgiev

This concept artist's take on the classic mech genre is worth a closer look, as is his fascination with Lovecraftian horror...

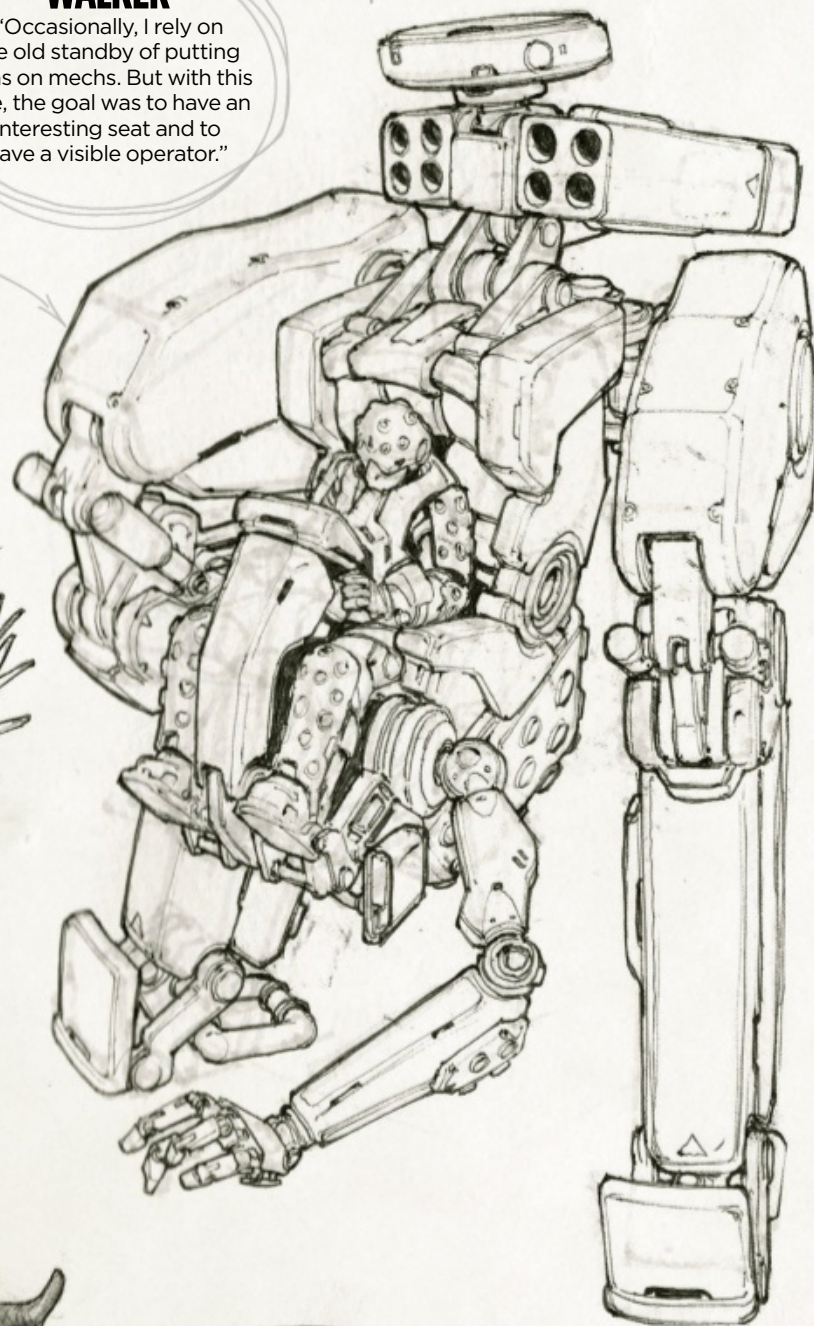
HOUND

"I'm a big fan of Lovecraftian and body horror. Delving into designs like this one helps me practise and learn new textures, organic details and patterns, and challenges me to balance details and visual areas of rest."



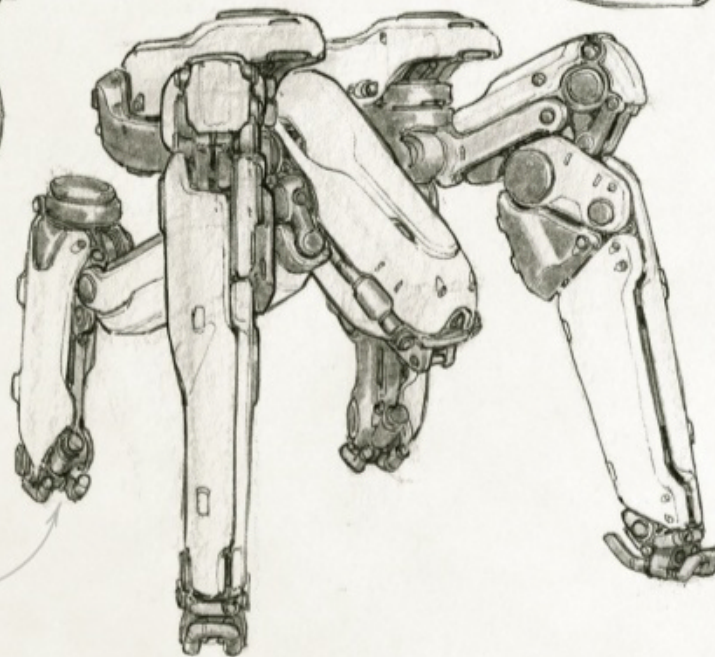
WALKER

"Occasionally, I rely on the old standby of putting guns on mechs. But with this one, the goal was to have an interesting seat and to have a visible operator."



MECH

"I'm always looking for new ways to be more efficient when sketching mechs. I want to explore fresh ideas, but I also practise to become more accurate at drawing and volumetric representation."



Artist PROFILE

Nikolay Georgiev

LOCATION: England



Nikolay is a concept artist and art director working in the games industry, where he's spent most of his career. He loves anatomy, design and architecture and tends to draw accurately rather than quickly. Although Nikolay's happy working both digitally and traditionally, there's something about traditional drawing on paper that always brings the artist back to his trusty sketchbook.

www.artstation.com/fuelstains

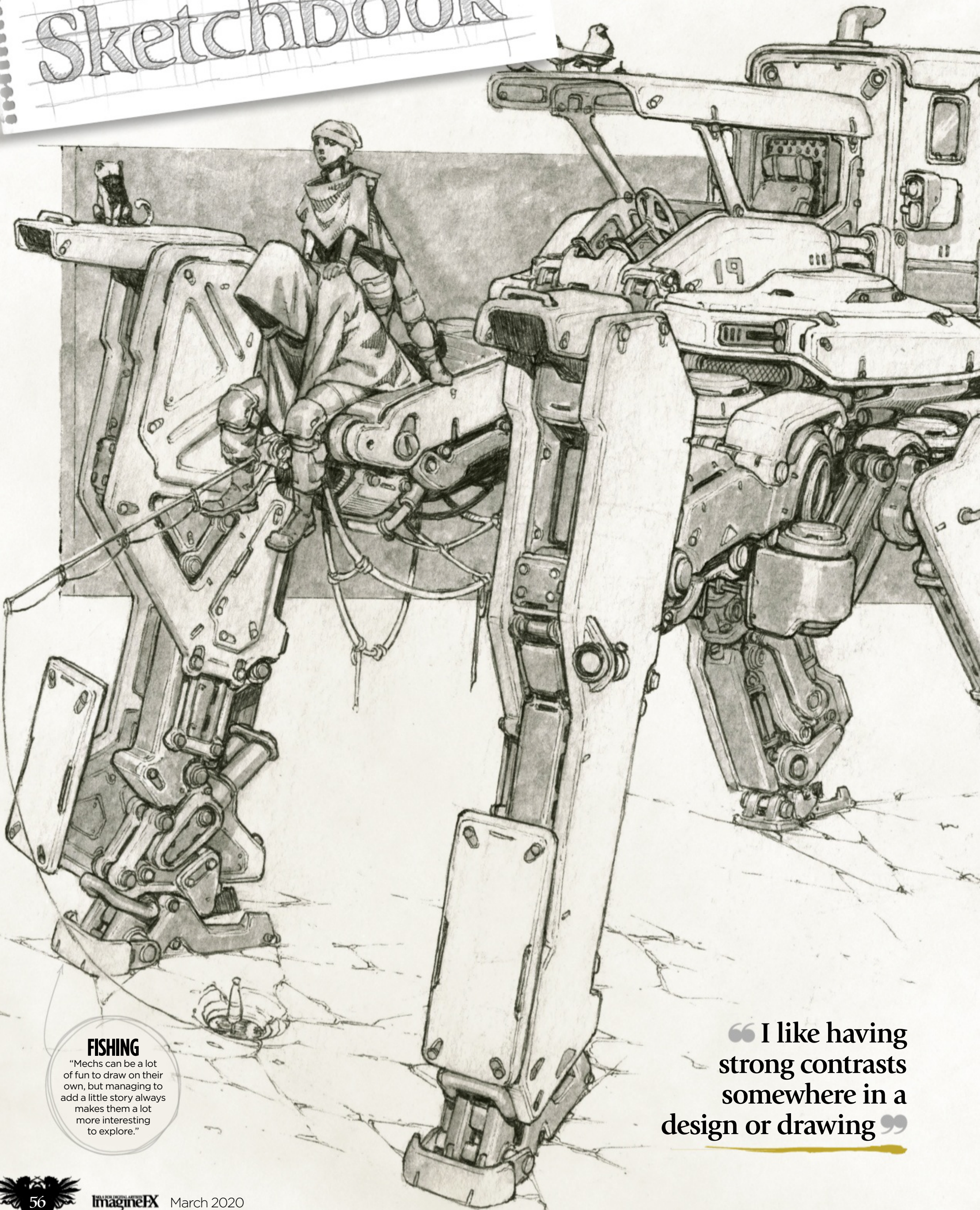
“I find Eastern European culture entertaining, especially gopniks and their fashion”



ROBOGOP

“I find Eastern European culture quite entertaining, especially gopniks [a Russian social class] and their fashion. This drawing is a result of that culture, mixed with a near-future twist and modern expensive brand shoe design.”

Sketchbook



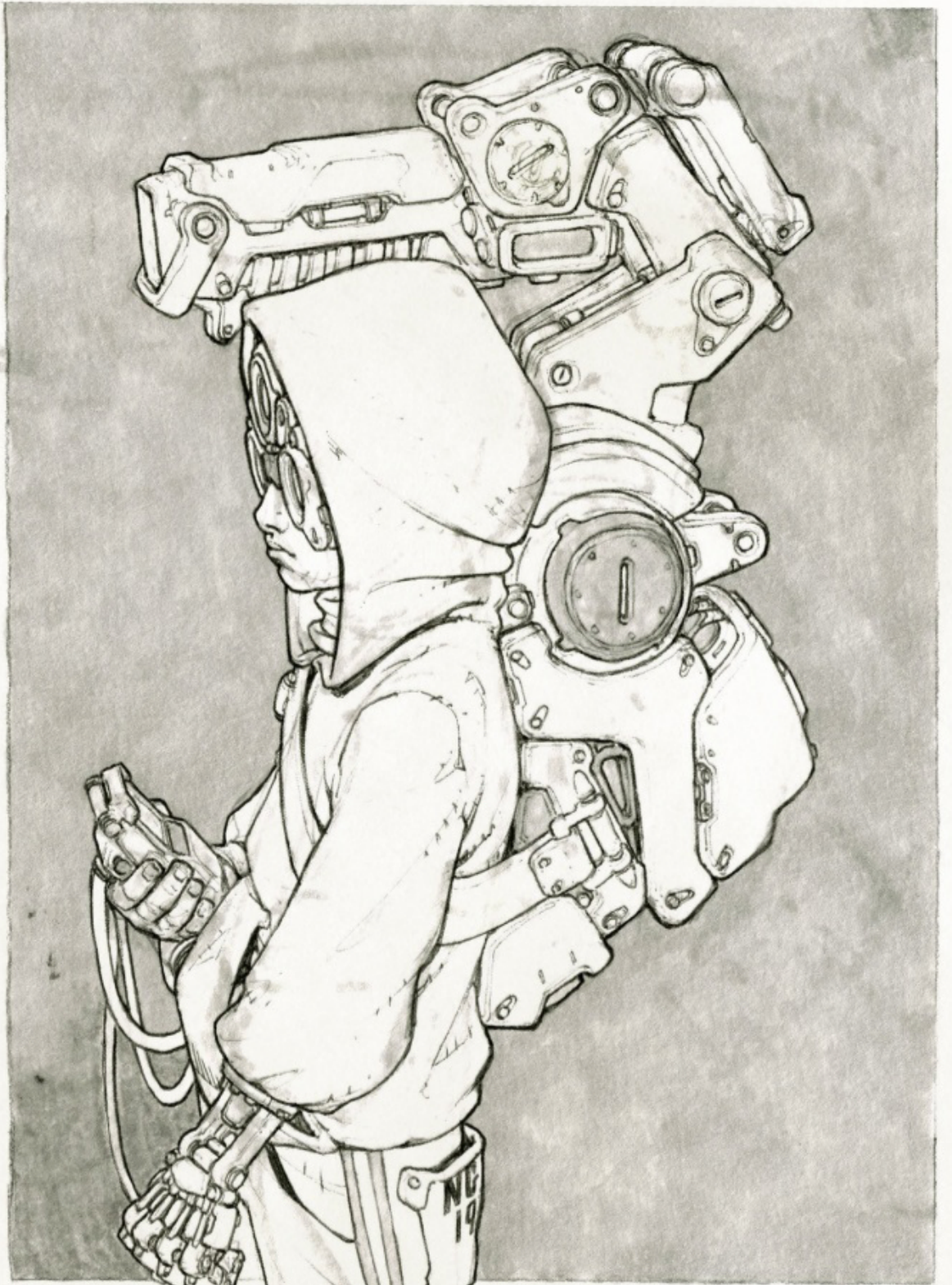
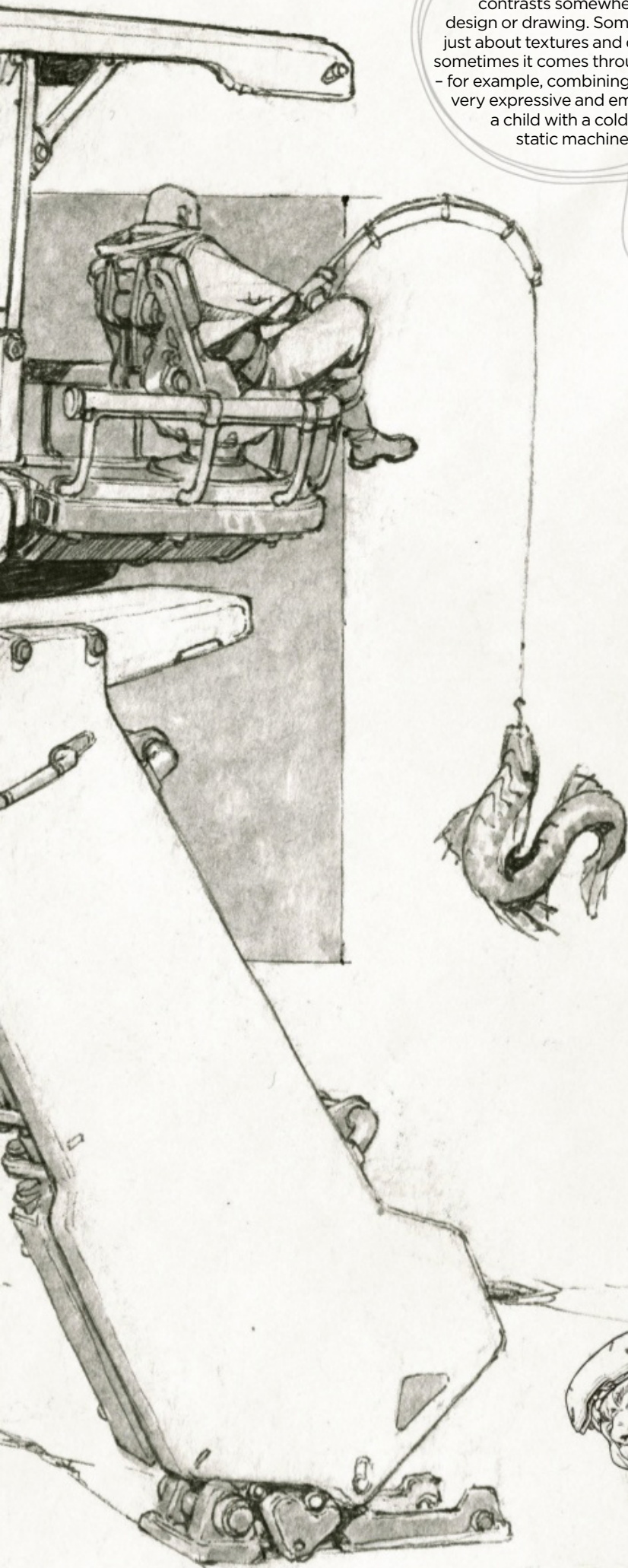
FISHING

"Mechs can be a lot of fun to draw on their own, but managing to add a little story always makes them a lot more interesting to explore."

“ I like having strong contrasts somewhere in a design or drawing ”

OVERKILL

"I like having strong contrasts somewhere in a design or drawing. Sometimes it's just about textures and details, but sometimes it comes through the idea – for example, combining something very expressive and emotive like a child with a cold and static machine."



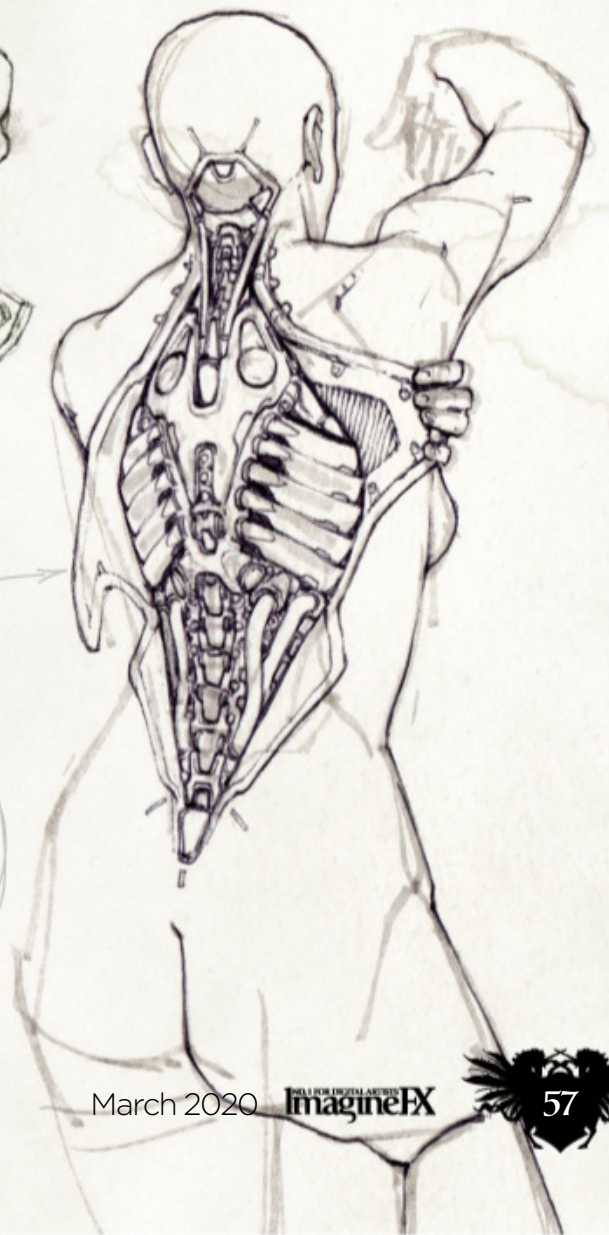
CHILDISH

"This image was stuck in my head for a while, because I don't usually draw happy things. I liked the idea of showing different kinds of childish behaviour, juxtaposed in a frozen moment of pure happiness."



CHANGING

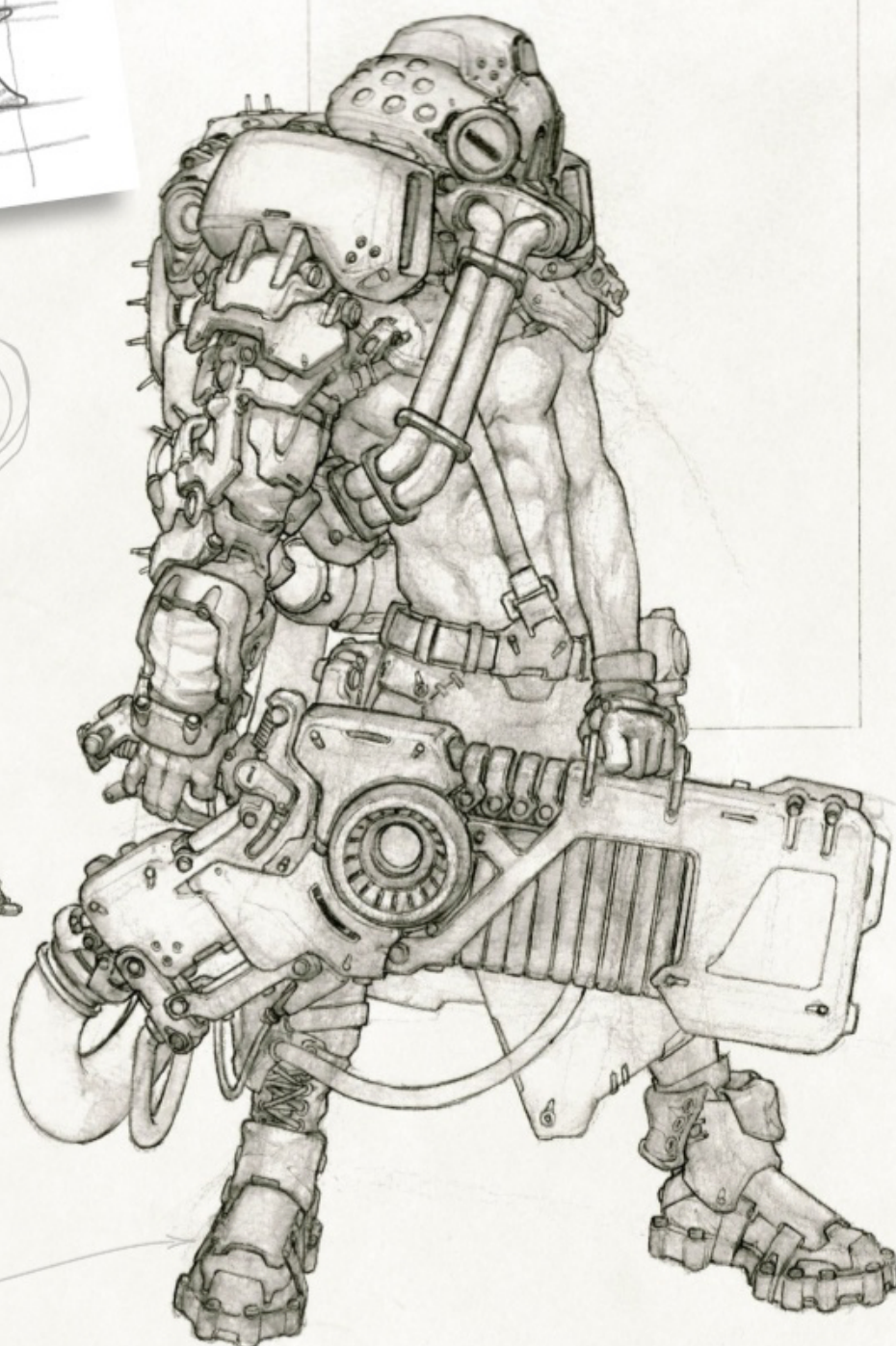
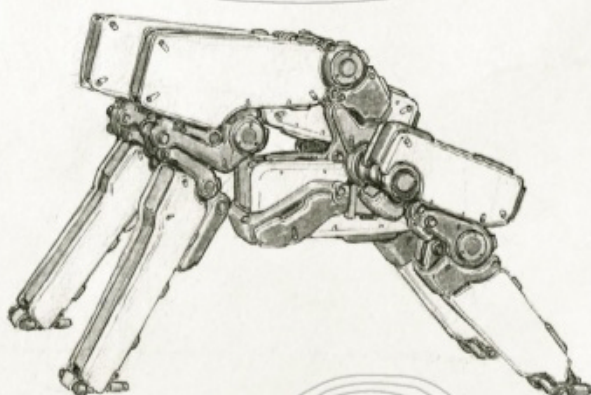
"This sketch was one of many I did as an exercise in gesture drawing. I sketched the pose from life and then used it as a base to add an interesting twist."



Sketchbook

MECHS

"These sketches sit within a middle ground, in terms of speed and accuracy. I practise drawing a basic frame in perspective, then force myself to resolve the mech quickly, while maintaining good line quality and detail."



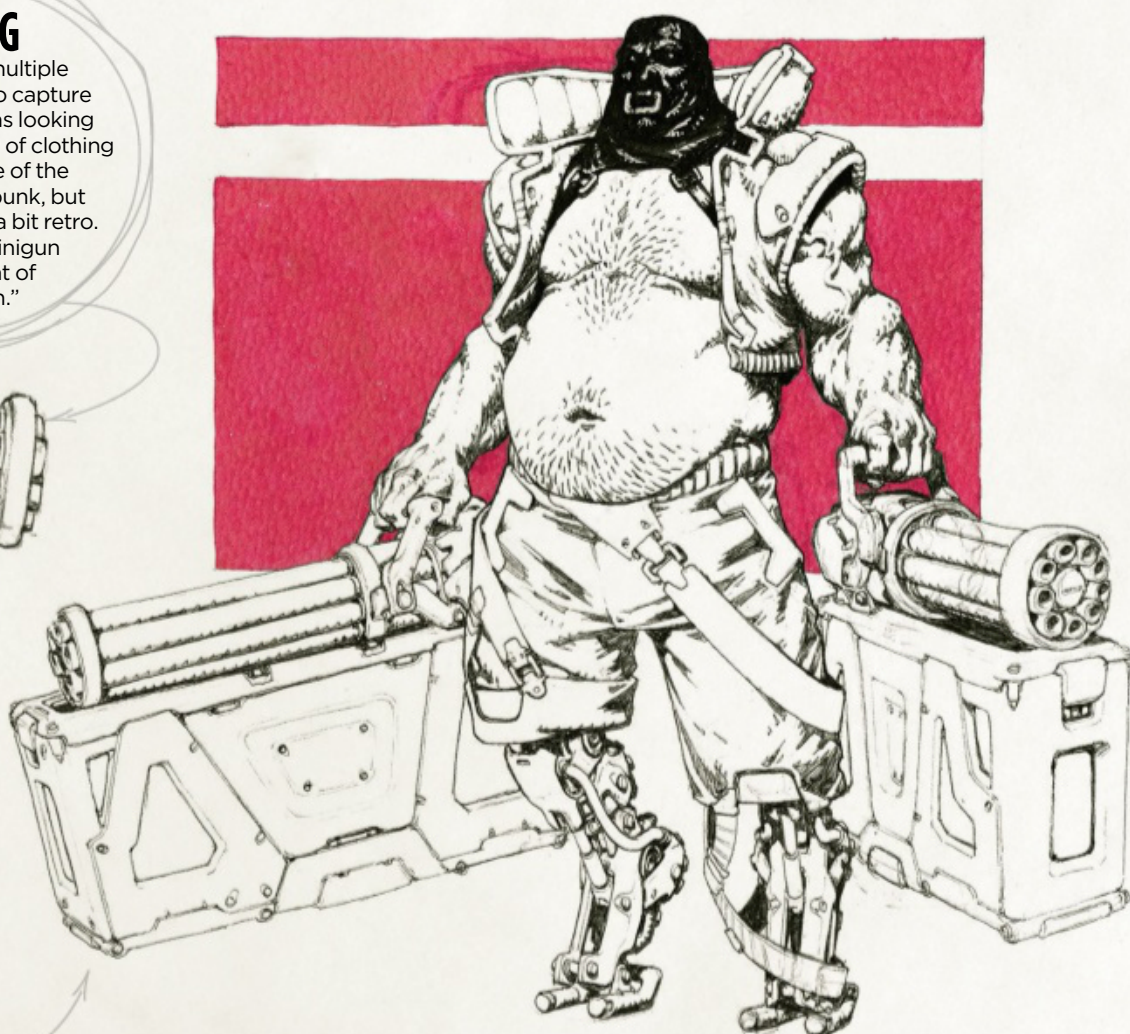
APOKID

"I love exploring heavy, clunky mechanics with a lot of layering and soft features. This sketch is the third iteration on a design from an old sketch that I really liked."



GATLING

"I often make multiple sketches trying to capture an idea. Here, I was looking to capture the style of clothing and overall vibe of the character: a bit punk, but futuristic, maybe a bit retro. The stubby minigun is a highlight of this sketch."



GATLING_2

"A more finished representation of the character I was exploring in the previous image, this time with a more realised weapon idea and a light fetish touch."

Do you want to share your sketches with your fellow ImagineFX readers? Send us an email with a selection of your art, captions for each piece and a photo and bio of yourself to sketchbook@imaginefx.com

“I sometimes explore ideas that test how much is too much...”

SENTINEL

“Because I enjoy drawing small details and a lot of cables, I sometimes explore ideas that test how much is too much, and how this affects a design if done deliberately.”

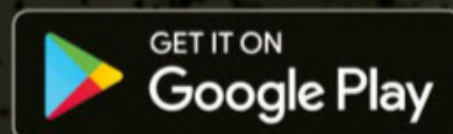
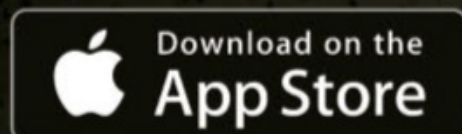




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Infinite **Painter**



ARTWORK BY: TIFFANIE MANG | ANDREW THEOPHILOPOULOS | JONATHAN HARDESTY | KESSI RILINIKI

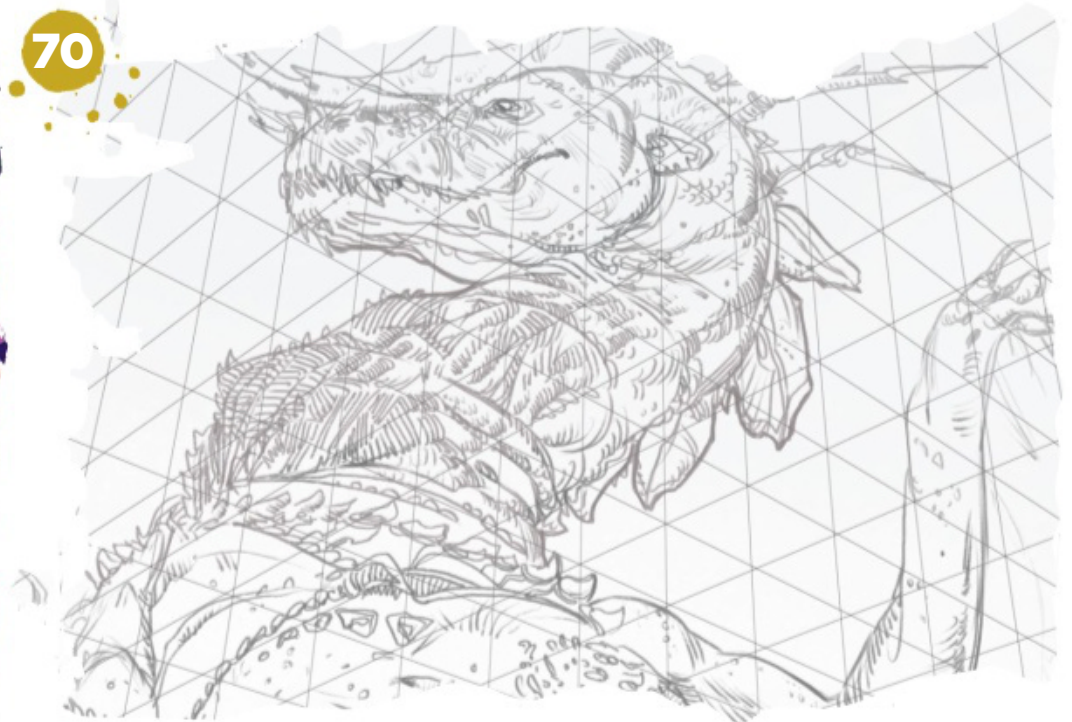
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Workshops

**Workshops assets
are available...**

Download each workshop's resources by turning to page 8. And if you see the video workshop badge, you can watch the artist in action, too.



Advice from the world's best artists



This issue:

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See how Ramón Nuñez balances elements in a street scene.

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Andrew Theophilopoulos and Jama Jurabaev explore the app.

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Phil Galloway brings expression, life and texture to your portraits.

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Create painting effects in Flame Painter, with Harvey Bunda.

88 New methods for painting wet skin

Give your portraits a unique look, with Antony Ward.

Photoshop

PAINT AN ENGAGING CHARACTER SCENE

Discover how **Ramón Nuñez** uses layering techniques, colour and lighting to help balance a range of different elements in one illustration

Artist PROFILE

Ramón Nuñez
LOCATION: Venezuela

Ramón describes himself as an artist who likes to solve visual problems.
<https://ifxm.ag/rnunez>

GET YOUR RESOURCES
See page 8 now!



I consider illustration one of the best ways to tell stories. I'm not able to use movement as with animation, or employ multiple comic panels. Instead, I have just one shot, so my illustration choices need to be precise.

It's exciting to present an idea that mixes characters and backgrounds, but I can get lost easily while I'm constructing the composition. I'm building something from my

imagination, so if I don't put my elements into some kind of order, then I'll have to spend a lot of time trying to solve a visual puzzle – with no guarantees that elements in the final art will be consistent. Building up a hierarchy of values during the creative process is crucial if I'm to create a functional composition that the viewer can read easily.

In this workshop I'm going to go through several art basics that you should know before you jump into a

complex illustration. This will include composition, perspective, values and colours. I'm going to paint a fun scene featuring four characters in a city.

It's important to keep things simple so you can maintain control, because at some point things will get complicated. The worst-case scenario is painting without feeling entirely comfortable about your progress so far. I'd always advise keeping everything organised, in case you need to go back and fix something.



1 Initial idea, perspective choices and sketching

I'll usually imagine a composition from one of two points of view: either a top view or a bottom view. My idea is simple: I'll be painting four characters taking a selfie in the middle of a city. I choose a top view in the perspective to show several elements of the four characters, with hints of the city's buildings in the background.



2 Developing the line-art

The drawing is the structure of my art; knowing the perspective from the beginning helps me to visualise the composition. I usually start with the head of the main character and then I draw the body, outfit, props and so on. I use reference images during this stage. ➡➡



Workshops




3 Blocking out and creating grey shapes

I create new “shape layers” below the line-art layer to fill in each character. Separating one from the other helps me to identify which elements are in the front, the middle and the back of the composition. Here, the order is the main characters in the foreground, then the mid-ground crowd and finally the city in the background.



4 Putting my colours in order


After defining the shapes, I start to add colours inside each shape layer. I choose between five or six desaturated colours for each character; the less relevant the character in the composition, the less saturated and contrasted their colours will be.

**RESOURCES**

**WORKSHOP
BRUSHES**


PHOTOSHOP

**CUSTOM BRUSHES:
CLEAN LINE**




I use this for professional work when creating precise and clean lines.

CHARCOAL LINE




This brush enables me to lay down traditional-looking, organic strokes.

RECTANGULAR BRUSH

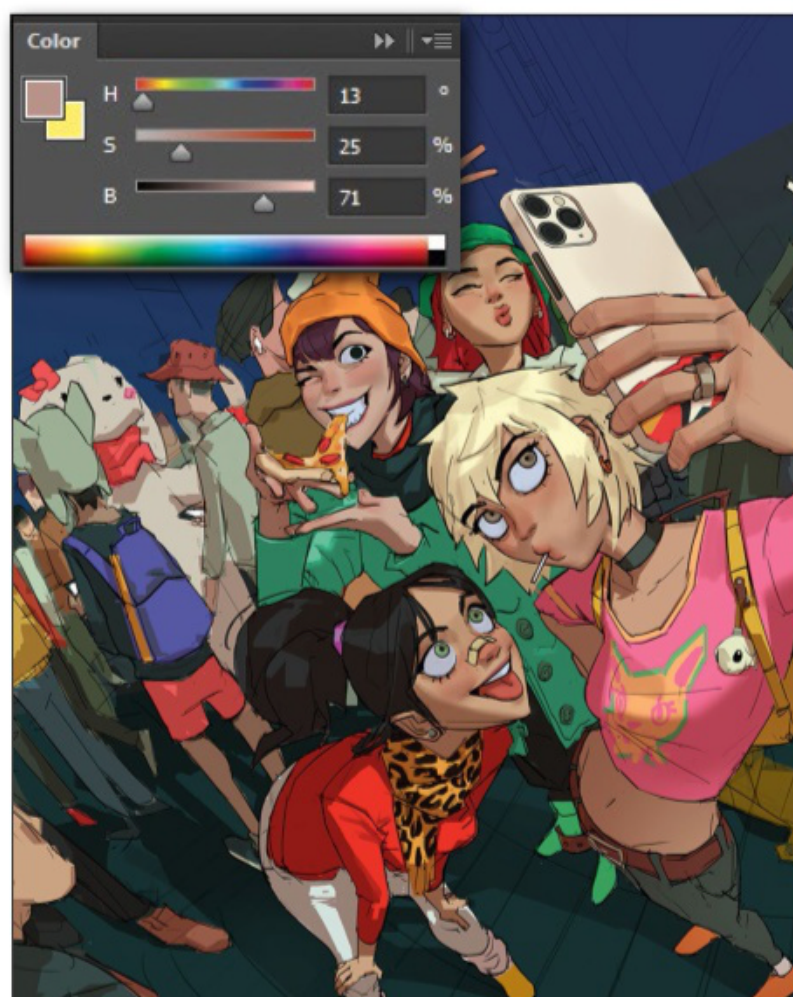


This brush creates consistency in shapes, values and colours.

SOFT BRUSH



A subtle brush for smoothing out shadows or adding lighting effects.



5 Painting the shadows

My light comes from the top right of the painting. All the shadows are on one Multiply layer, which I then desaturate. If my shadows are too dark then I can't see the drawing, and if they're too saturated then they can affect my choice of colours. It's a balancing act.



6 Background detail choices

I don't need to be extremely detailed with the visual information beyond my focal point (the main characters), so I paint the city's buildings in the background with a rectangular brush, using city photo references as a guide. I'm careful not to include too many details – it can end up becoming a noisy distraction.



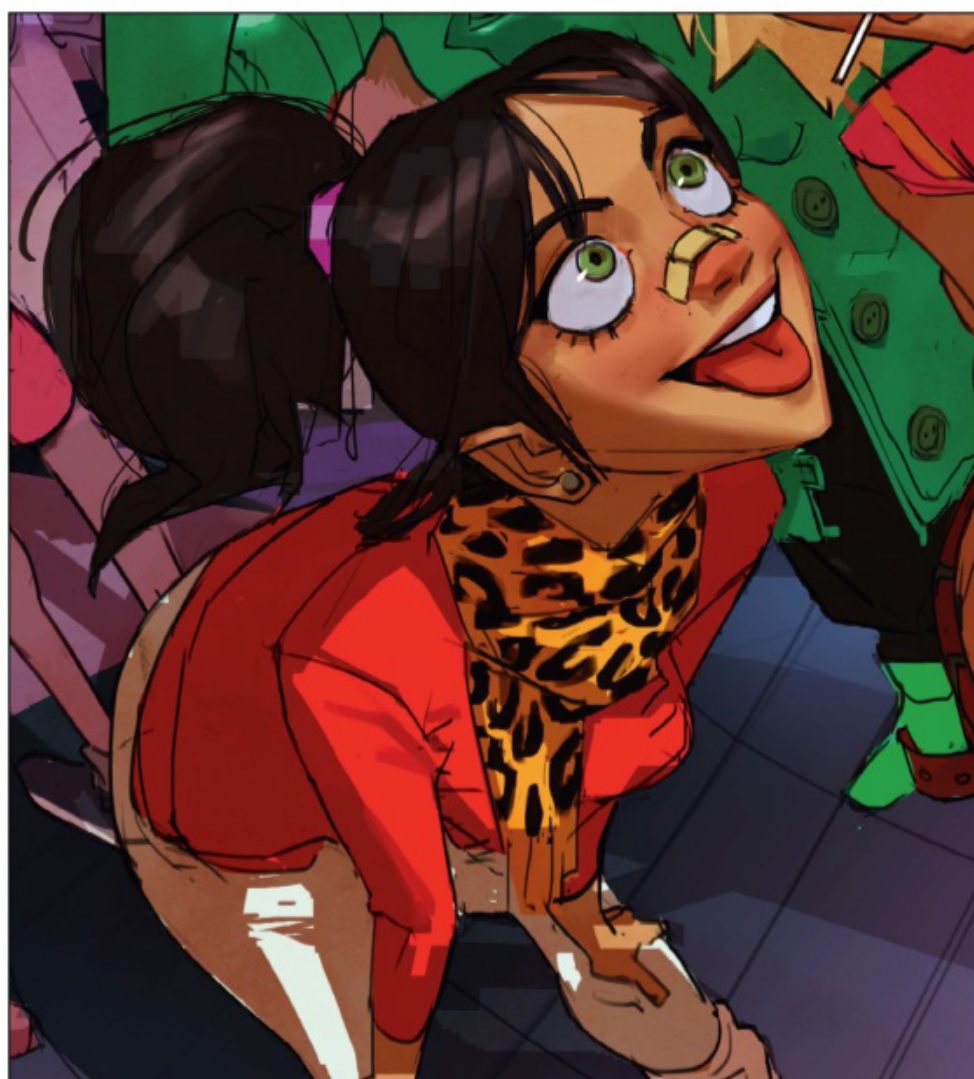
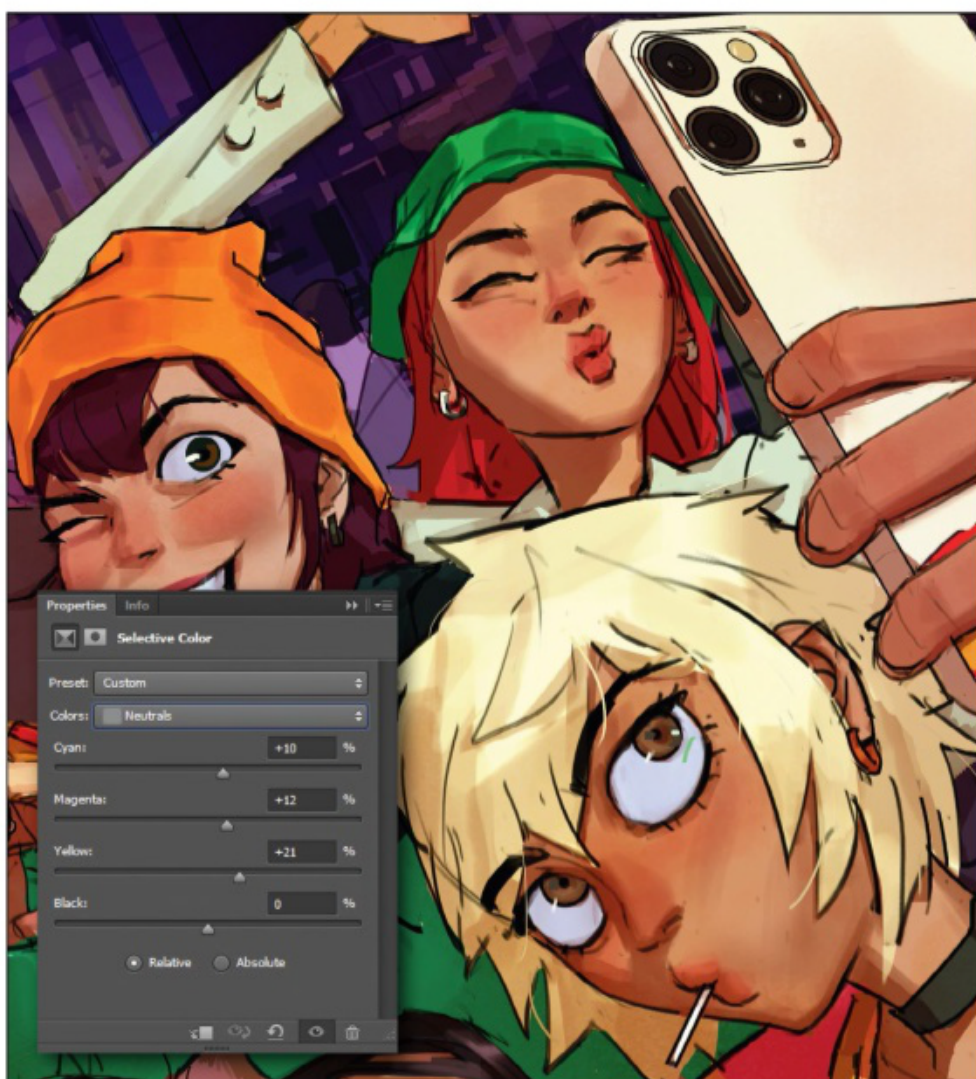
7 Creating depth between elements
I create separate layer groups for the main figures, the crowd and the city. Inside each group I add new layers in different blending modes (Hue, Multiply, Darken and Color) to emphasise their different positions in the scene. I want to push my main characters more into the front, while darkening and desaturating the background.



8 Using Adjustment layers to add some energy
I add more contrast and saturation to the illustration using the Levels and Selective Color Adjustment layer options. Working on a desaturated and low-contrast version at the beginning of the process keeps my attention on the line-art.



9 Bringing in texture to mimic traditional media
I sometimes like to add a subtle watercolour effect to my art. I lay down soft strokes with a watercolour texture brush on a layer on top, then blend in Overlay mode before reducing the Opacity to 30 per cent. You can't really notice it, but I like to know it's there. I like the old-school, traditional look of some artworks. ➡➡



10 Using Selective Color mode to develop the mood of the painting

If I have a range of colours in an illustration, I can then use the Selective Color tool to help me to merge everything. This gives the painting a cohesive mood. I only touch the whites and neutrals because I like to keep my shadows desaturated.



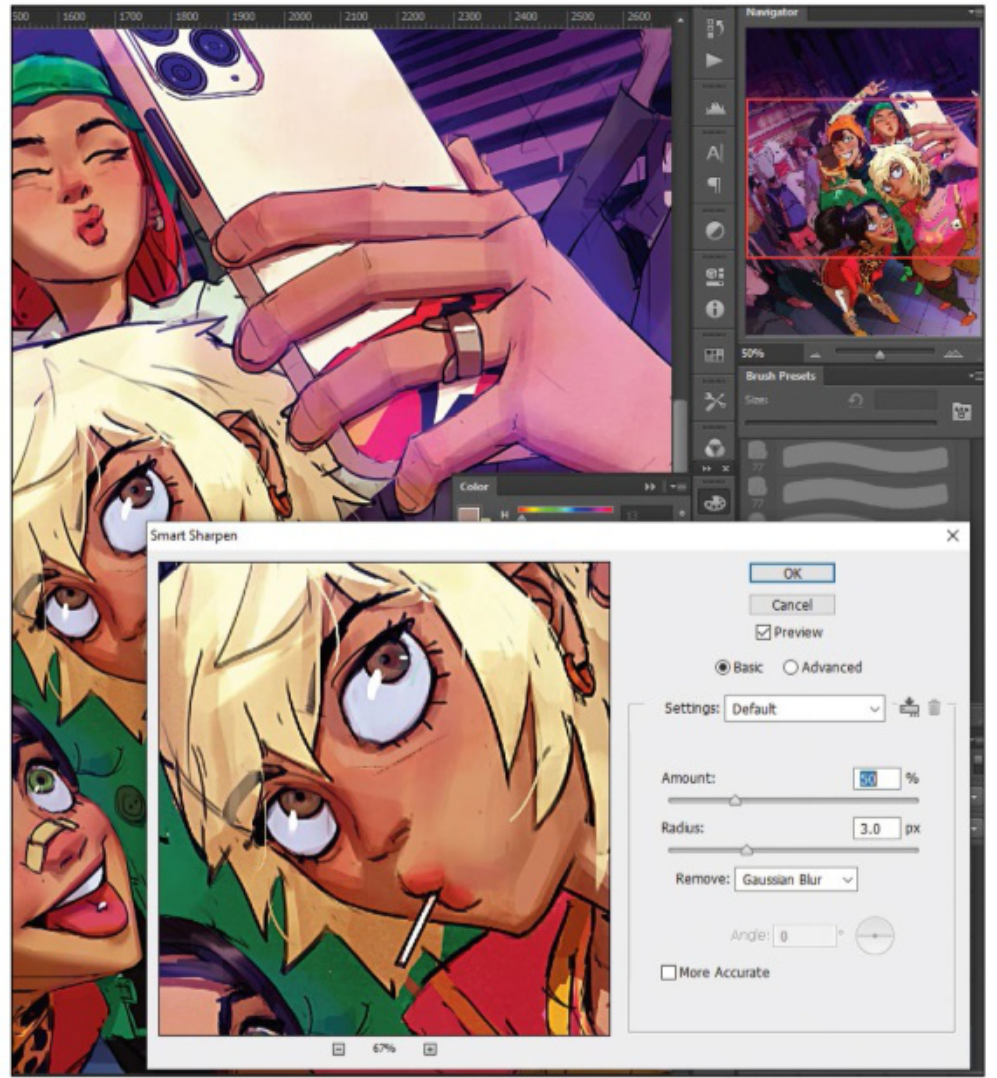
11 Adding small details after the hard work

At this point I'm happy with the painting as it stands, so I spend a bit of time fixing little things. I also flip the canvas, which highlights any mistake in the composition. I do this several times during the first few steps, but it's good to check again that everything reads okay as I'm nearing the finish line.



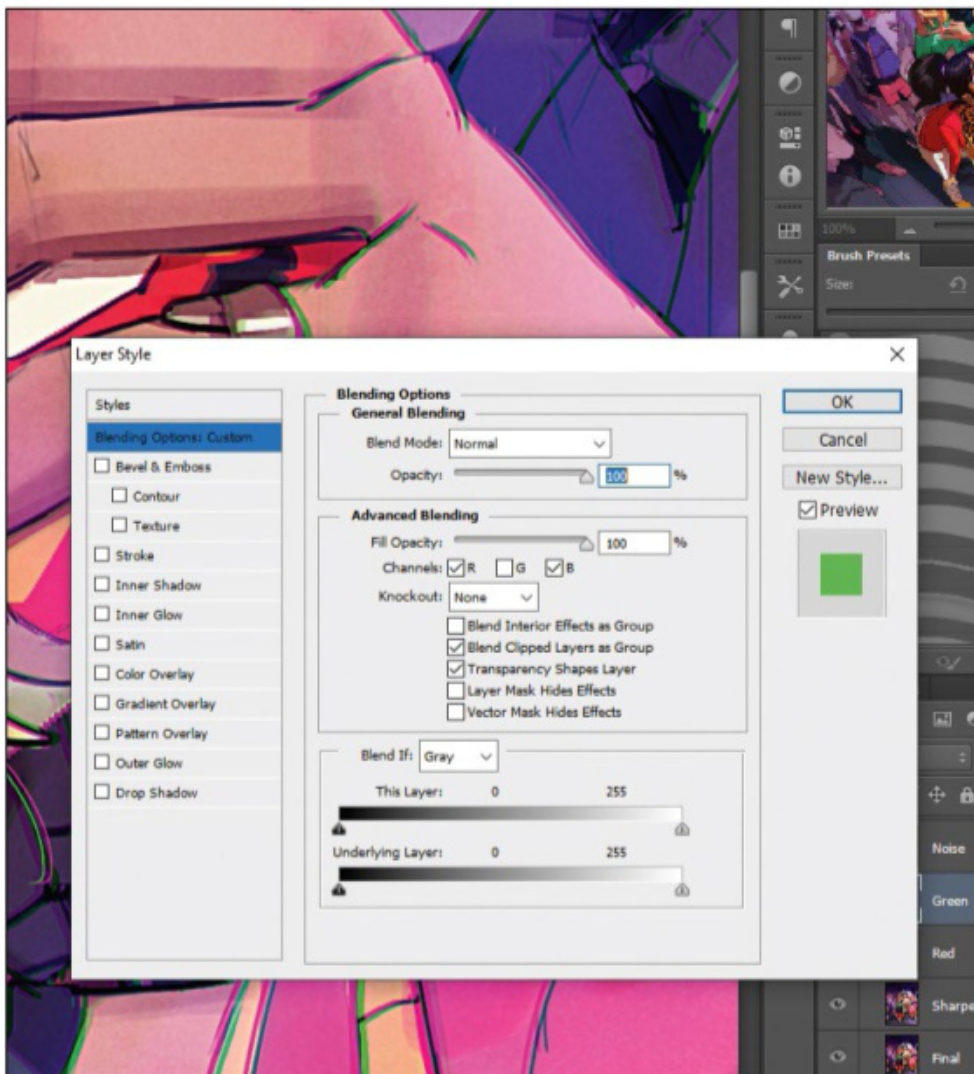
12 Applying Color Dodge lighting

I create a new Color Dodge layer on top, select a saturated blue and a Soft brush, and do small strokes in strongly lit areas where I want to capture the viewer's attention. I then reduce the Opacity to this layer so that it doesn't become too noisy.



13 Sharpening elements in the composition

I group all the layers, duplicate the group and then merge them into one image. Then I select Filter>Sharpen>Smart Sharpen. I like how it looks, but be careful – overusing this filter will ruin your hard work. For best results, set the Amount to 50 per cent and Radius to 3.0px.



14 Generate chromatic aberration for that anime touch

Duplicate the image twice and bring these to the top of the layer stack. Double-click the layer of the first copy and in the Layer Style window turn off the red channel under Advanced Blending. Press OK and then move the layer a little bit to the left. Do the same with the second copy, but this time turn off the green channel and move the layer a little bit to the right. And that's your chromatic aberration right there! 🌈

Next month

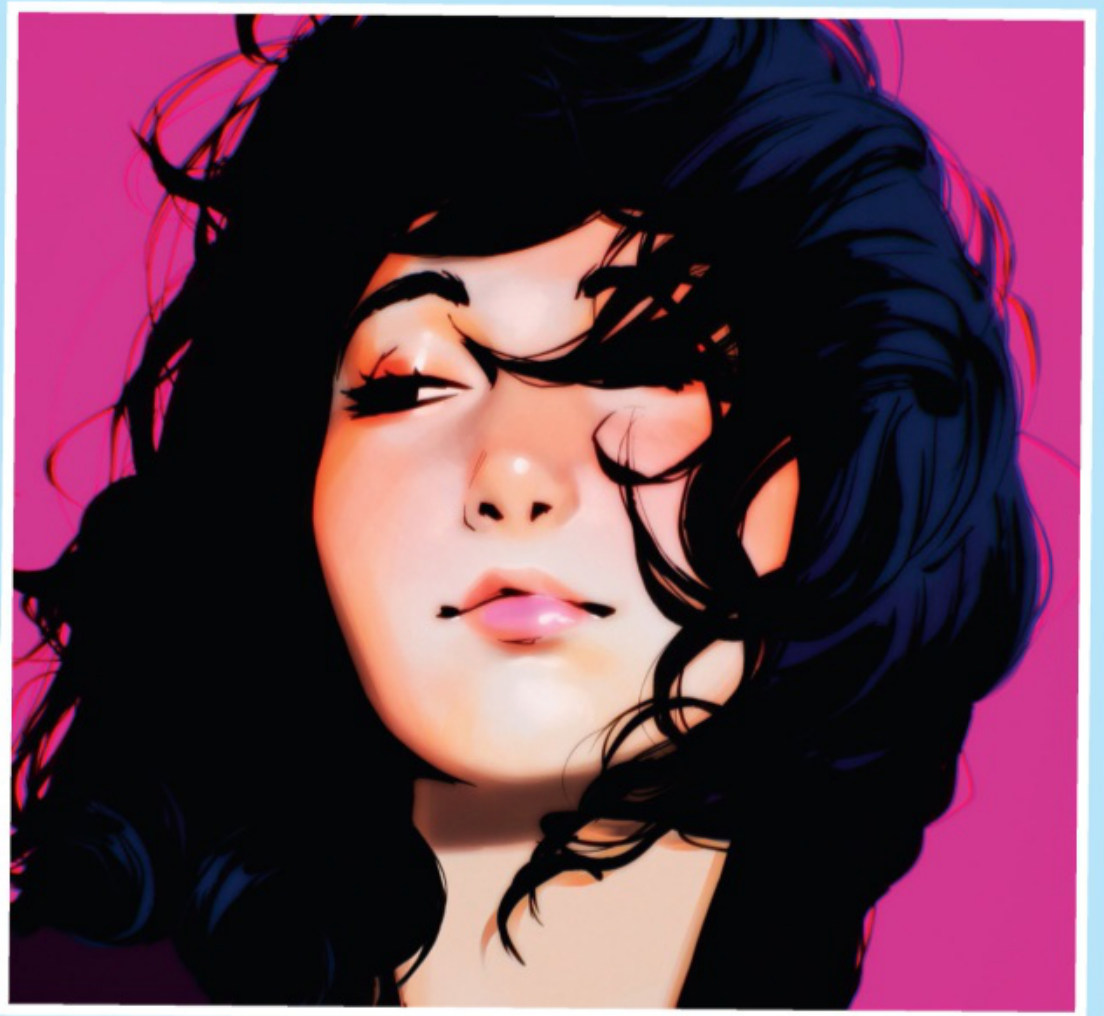
Ilya Kuvshinov
creates next
issue's cover
and lead
workshop!



Next month in...
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS
ImagineFX

Make magical manga in 2020!

How to draw and paint your best-ever manga with advice from the fabulous Ilya Kuvshinov!



All this... and more!

How to draw manga faces

Step-by-step insight on developing the right elements for a manga face.

Camilla D'Errico

We interview the pop surrealist and comic artist about her varied career.

Clip Studio Paint tuition

Get better at creating using this software, with the amazing kiDChan.

Ziuk's fantastic sketchbook

Spanish artist Ziuk shows us around his surreal and intricate sketches.

ISSUE 185 ON SALE IN THE UK 21 February 2020

Artist Insight

15 TIPS FOR USING INFINITE PAINTER

Andrew Theophilopoulos and **Jama Jurabaev** are on hand to share the superpowers of their favourite mobile art app, Infinite Painter

Together, Jama and I will show off a variety of our favourite tools and techniques in Infinite Painter. Although I'm more of a traditional illustrator, I've been able to capture the look of traditional art, while taking advantage of some powerful tools from the digital world.

Mobile tablets are changing the art landscape. Take, for example, the ability to

couple an oily brush with a three-point perspective grid to create dynamic imagery that fits in the realm of an art gallery. Or how about when I took my iPad into the Paris museums to learn from the Old Masters?

Jama is going to share tips on how you can knock out concept sketches using a few techniques and a handy custom interface.

We're sure these tips will not only speed up your art process, but will hopefully expand your abilities beyond your comfort zone.

If you'd like to trick out your toolset while supporting Jama and myself, head over to www.gumroad.com/l/JamaProPack and download our custom brush pack full of goodies for Infinite Painter!

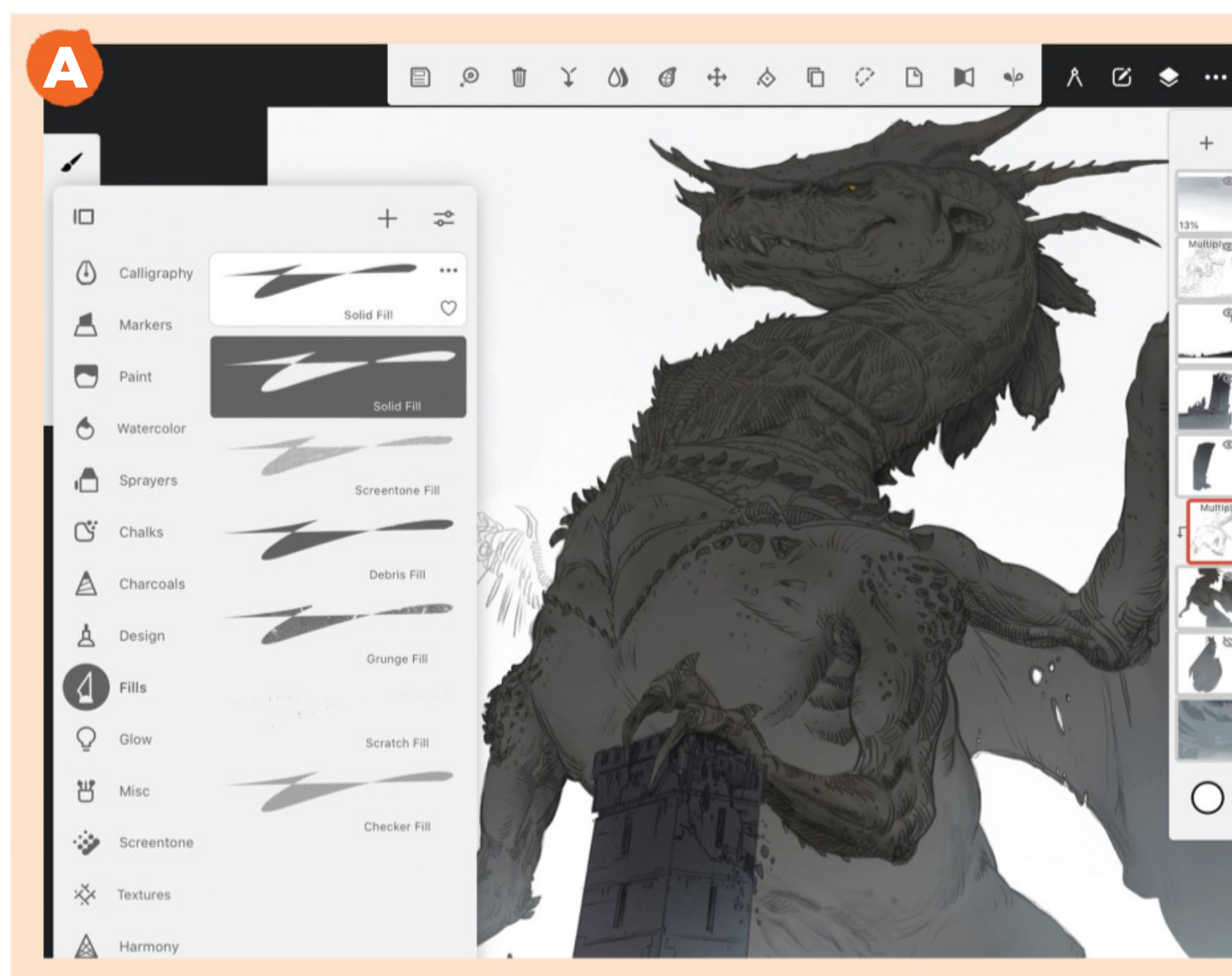


Artist PROFILE

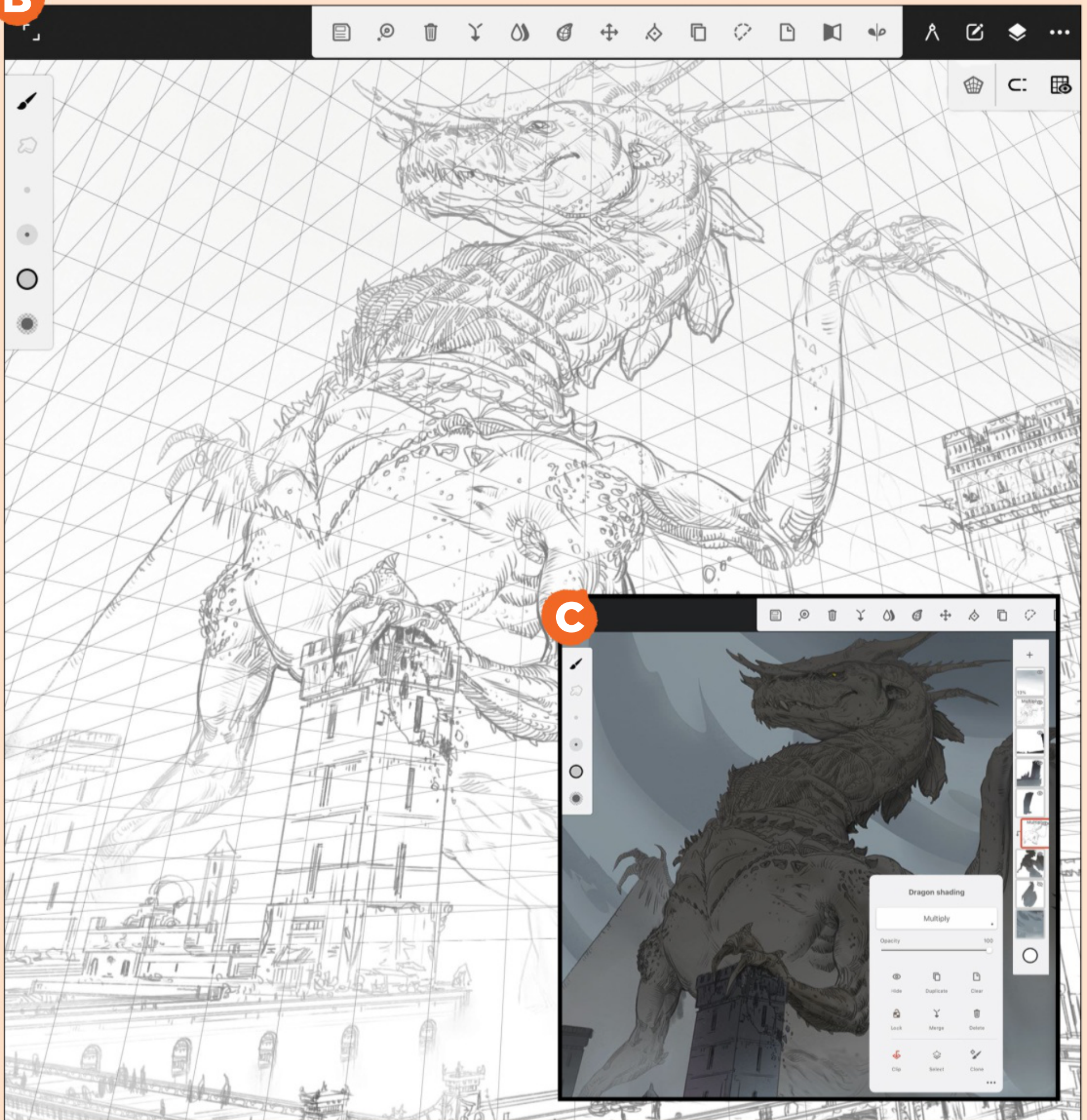
Andrew Theophilopoulos
LOCATION: US

Andrew started his freelance career in feature animation after studying illustration at Ringling College, before travelling, teaching and working for notable clients like Riot Games. www.andrewtheo.com

INFINITE PAINTER'S KEY TOOLS, WITH **ANDREW THEOPHILOPOULOS**



B



1 A PAINTER'S APPROACH TO INFINITE PAINTER

A

Fill your silhouettes

Final line art is a great way to solve problems and refresh your design. But when it's time to build the layer structure for painting, open the Brush palette and use the Solid Fill brush to fill in the silhouettes of your characters or environment. I use the Solid Fill as both the brush and eraser.

B

Adjust your perspective

If you have a dynamic scene that has a unique vanishing point, try using our Perspective Grid tools. By turning off the Magnet I was able to use the grid as a guide for the dragon's towering body, while turning the Magnet back on locked the architectural drawing into perspective.

C

Add detailing

If you create a new layer above the silhouette, you can then use a Clipping Mask to add detail to the layer below without altering your original silhouette. Simply tap the Layer icon in the Layer palette and then clip your render pass to the layer or group below. ➡➡

Workshops

2 DOCKING COLOR WHEEL AND TONE LOCK

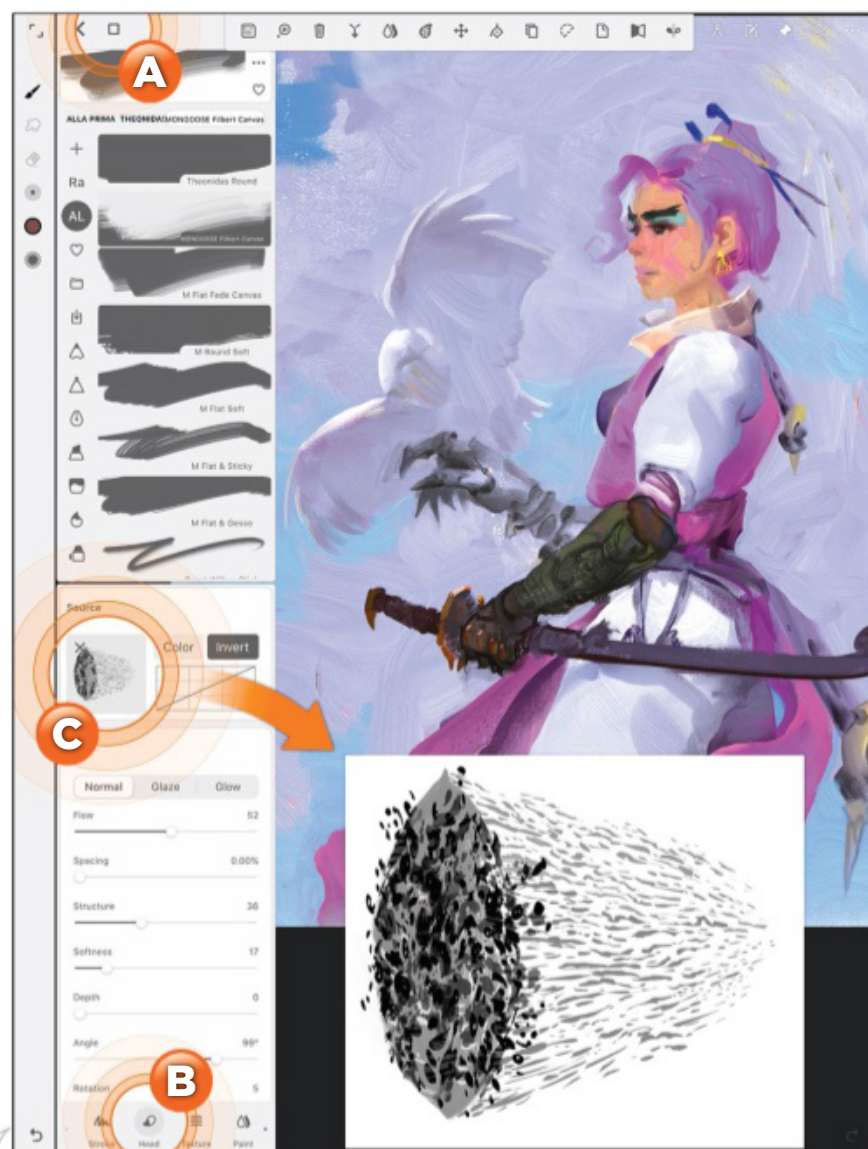
Here's a tip to speed up your colour picking. Pick your Brush tool (A), then open your Color Wheel and with two fingers (B) grab the wheel to dock it on to the canvas. Notice the Sun icon on the wheel: try clicking it and turning the wheel. When the Sun icon is active, the value of the colour choice will stay the same as you spin the wheel (C). When spinning the wheel without the Sun icon active, see how a yellow colour is brighter than a blue and how the colour dot (C) no longer adjusts the value automatically.



3 IMPORT FLOATING REFERENCE IMAGERY

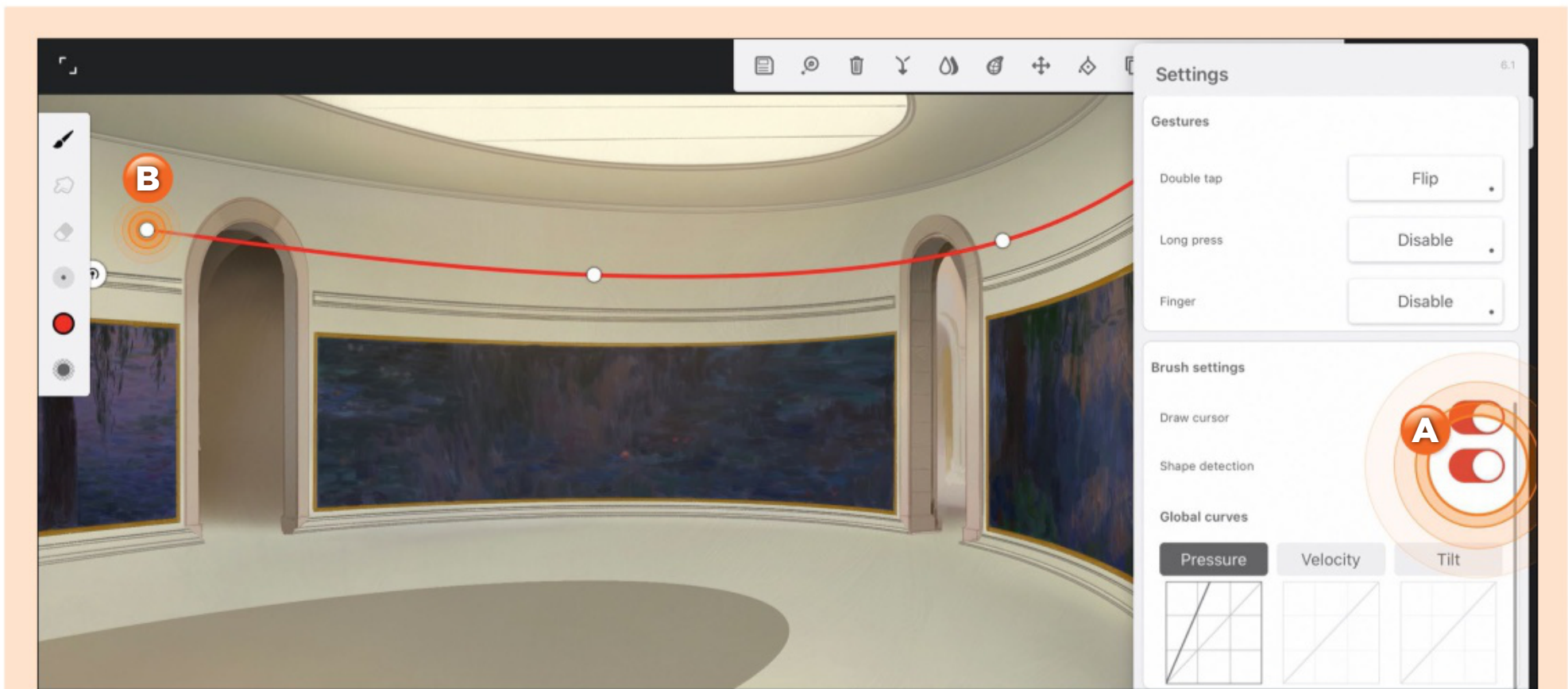
Click the three buttons at the top-right corner (A) to open the Options menu and hit Import (B). This gives you the option to load an image from your gallery, clipboard or even take a photo with the device's camera. Once you've made your photo selection, you can import it as a Layer or Reference: choose Reference (C). Now your inspiration will float above the canvas. You can resize it, flip it and toggle its visibility by clicking the Pin icon on the top-right of the screen.

“ Load an image from your gallery, clipboard or take a photo with the device's camera ”



4 CREATE A CUSTOM OIL BRUSH

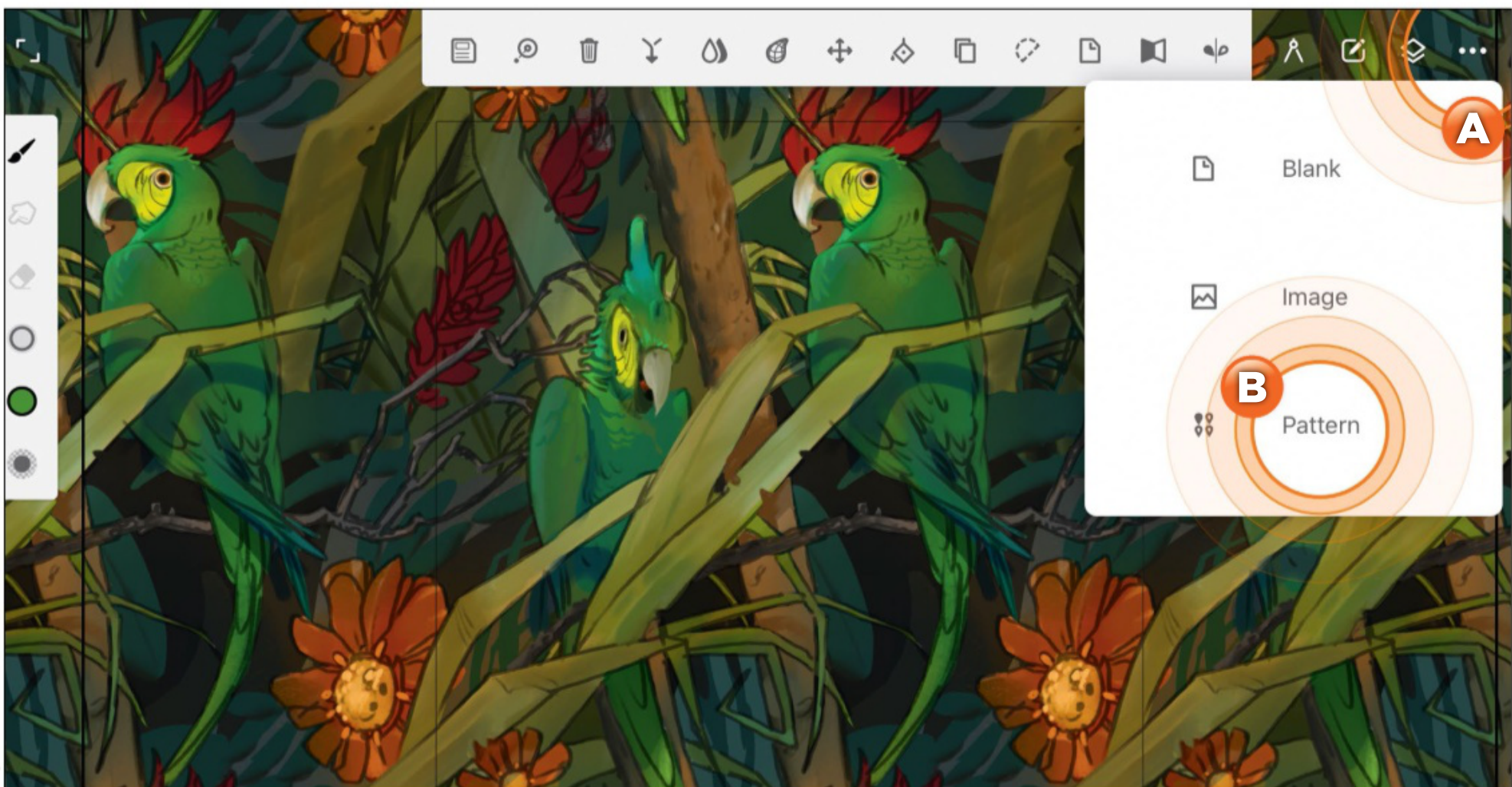
The most important feature to customise in a paintbrush (A) is the “head” shape. Think of the head like stamping a brush with black ink. In greyscale, try to capture the clusters of bristles on a white layer. With the Lasso tool, select your brush head shape (B) and on the right of the Lasso functions click +Brush. Now go to the “head” section of your brush and change the head to your black and white stamp (C). Play with the other Brush Creator settings to finalise the feel of your new tool.



5 SMART LINES AND SHAPES

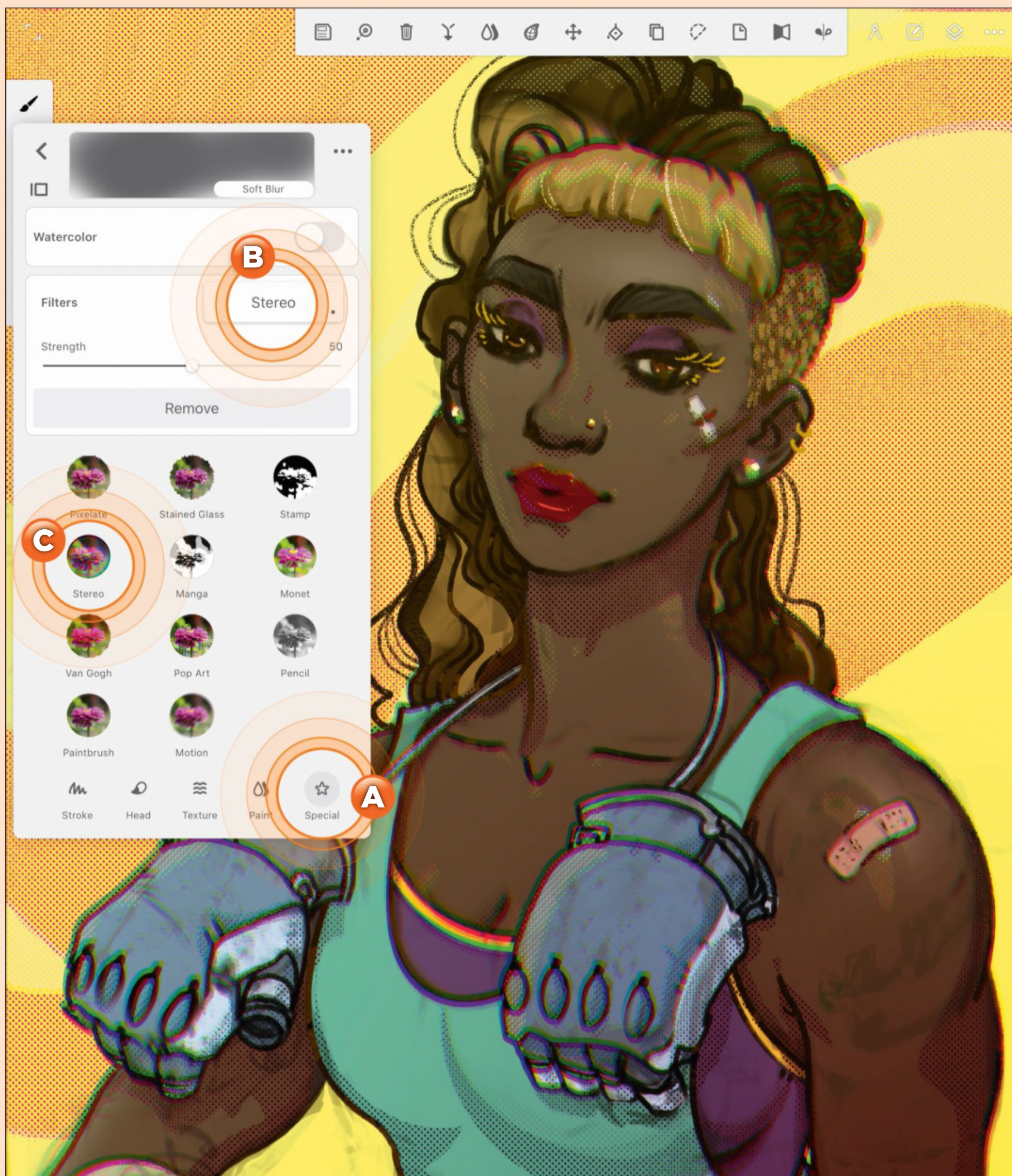
Infinite Painter has a wonderfully useful setting that makes it possible for you to activate predictive shapes by holding down the stylus at the end of a stroke. The system can detect all sorts of shapes such as lines, arcs, ellipses, rectangles and even complex paths.

The curved lines in this copy of a Monet masterpiece were beyond my skill set. With one single Smart Curve activated (A), I moved the pins into position to create the curved lines in the architecture and golden frames, then cloned the line by tapping the Stamp icon and moved those new pins down to the next horizontal curve (B).



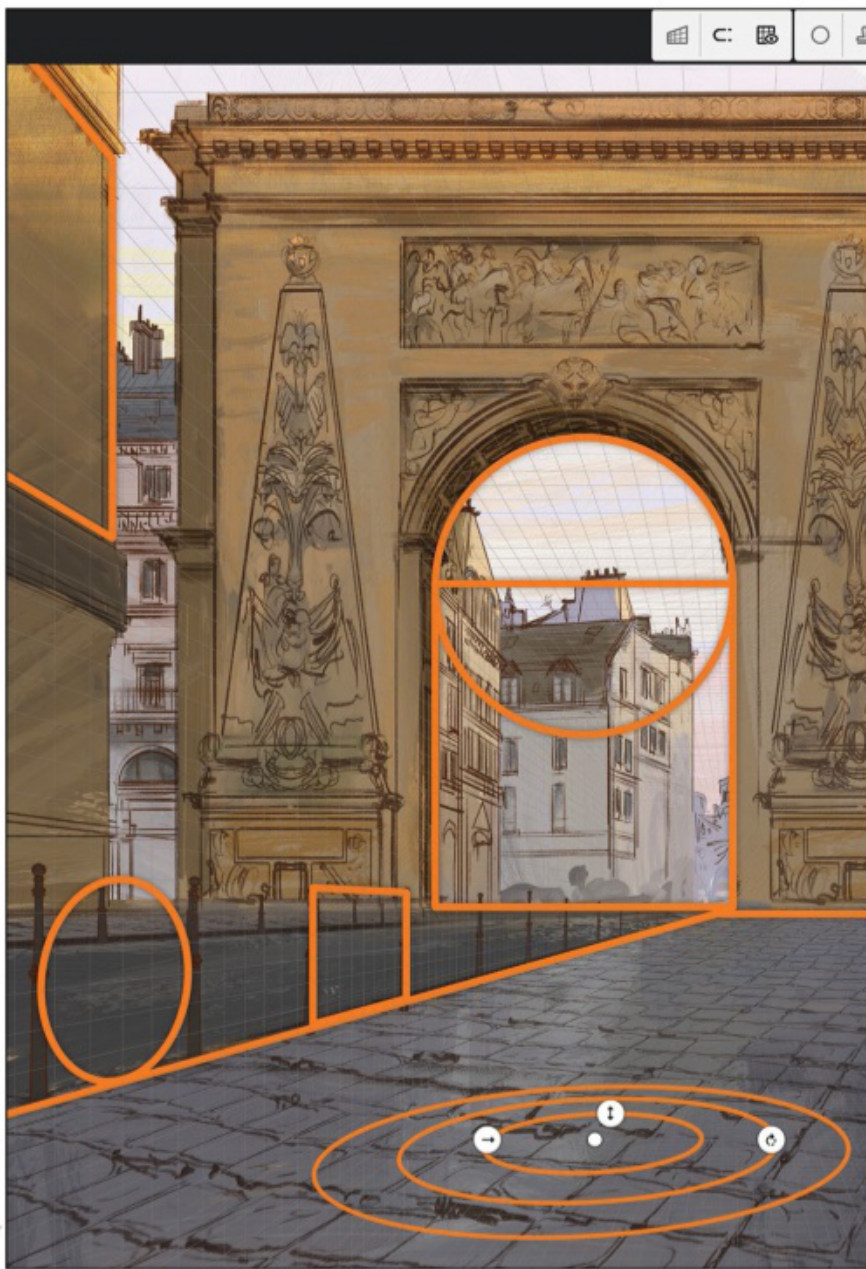
6 MAKE CUSTOM PATTERNS AND TEXTILES

Seamless pattern projects are great for textile designs and brush making. Open the New Project window (A) and choose Pattern (B). This file type will automatically stitch together the four corners of your illustration, which can then be used as a patterned asset in an illustration using the Pattern Fill tool or as a standalone textile for some wrapping paper. Alternatively, you could even make a custom brush using the pattern as your brush texture, and selecting Warp as the texture setting. Patterns such as fish or snakeskin would make a cool brush! ➡➡



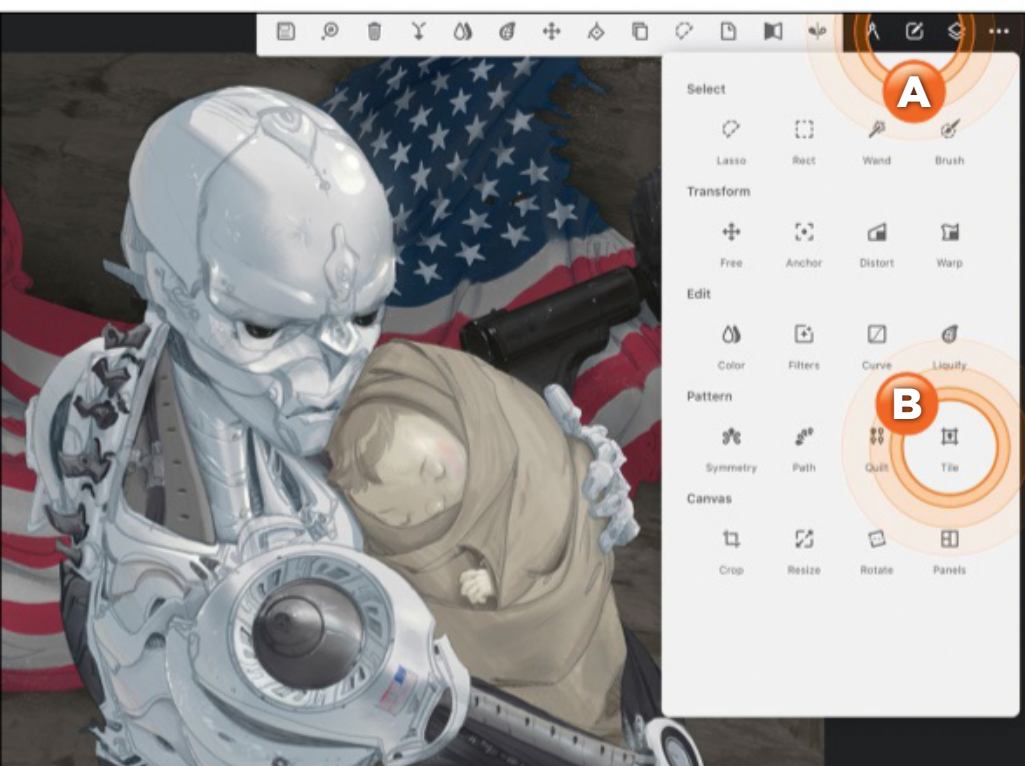
7 ATTACH A FILTER TO YOUR BRUSHES

In the Brush editor, click the Special column (A) and check out the Filters section (B). In this example, I attached the Stereo filter (C) to an Airbrush that pinpoints the effect of separating the RGB channels. But what if you attached something like Motion Blur instead? You could give the boxing gloves a punching effect by swiping your brush in the direction that you want the blur effect to show. See what kind of cool brush combos you can make by attaching filters!



8 ADD SHAPES TO PERSPECTIVE GRIDS

Using the Perspective Grids is pretty straightforward: adjust your vanishing points and then toggle the Magnet on and off to stick to the grid. Add an ellipse or square with the Magnet active and that shape will snap into that active perspective. Slide it around, and watch how the shape morphs into perspective. You can clone the shape by tapping the Stamp icon, then adjust the new shape as you need it. When your shape is still active, change the brush or brush size to alter the line weight, or use the Solid Fill brush for a solid shape.



9 PAINT WITH SYMMETRY

Symmetry can be a powerful shortcut for certain designs in concept art or even real-world sketching. Take, for example, the Eiffel Tower, which I painted from life in the grassy lawns of Paris. Open the Drawing tools panel (A) and with the Vertical Symmetry tool enabled (B), move and rotate it into place and lock it. Now all your tools will be mirrored, including the brushes, Lasso, Liquify and more! This tool enabled me to quickly paint the tower. Paint brushes will lay down paint differently on both sides based on the asymmetry of a brush, which adds a subtle variation so that it's not 100 per cent symmetrical.



“Symmetry can be a powerful shortcut for certain designs in concept art”

10 GENERATE PATTERNS QUICKLY AND EASILY

Rather than starting a new pattern file type to paint, for example, stars on a flag, you can create the star pattern inside your standard file type. When making the first star for the flag, I use the Kaleidoscope tool in the Symmetry section. Then I open the Selection tool panel (A), and with the Tile tool (B) in the Pattern section, I make a box around the star and play with the size of the box to influence the spacing between stars. You can also check some of the mirror-flipping icons to give the pattern a more randomised look. ➡➡



Artist PROFILE

Jama Jurabaev

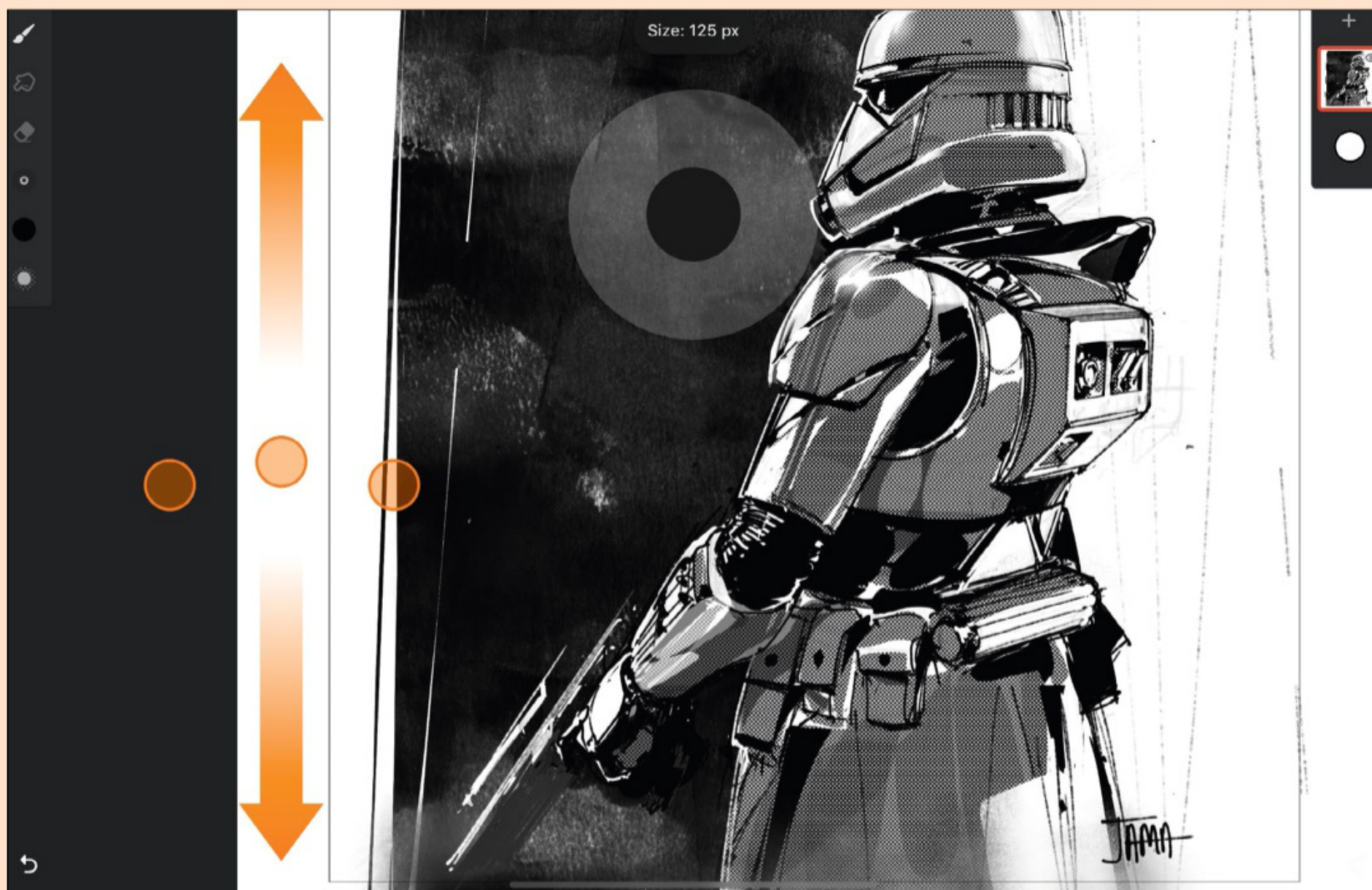
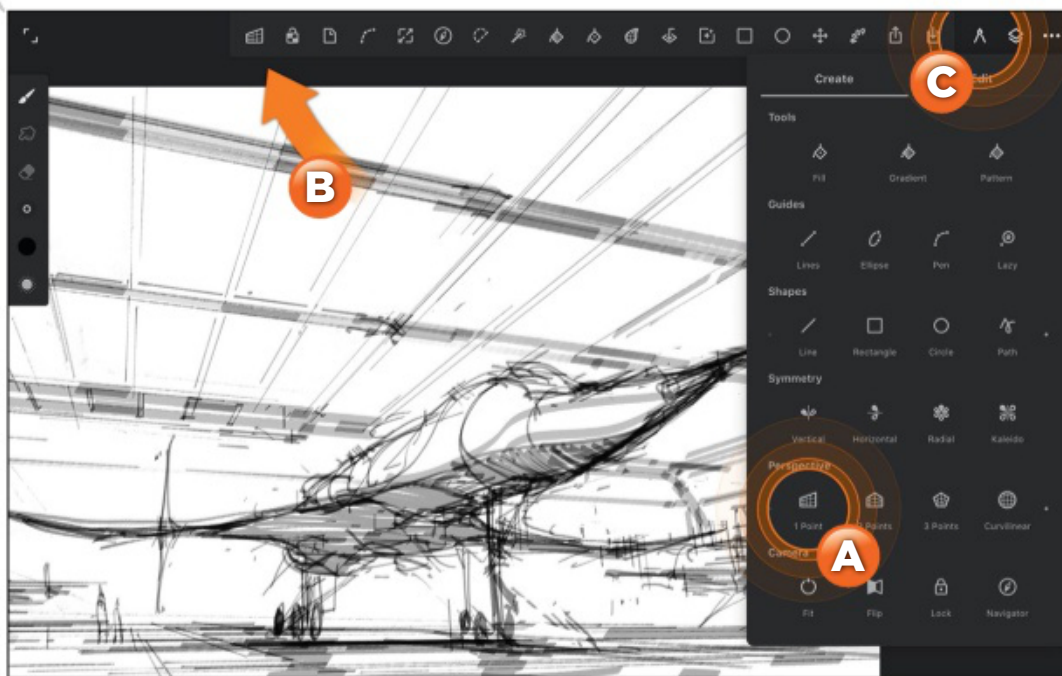
LOCATION: England

Jama is a professional concept artist, illustrator, teacher and matte painter working for the film and game industry. www.jamajurabaev.com

JAMA JURABAEV SHARES HIS SPEEDY CONCEPT ART TIPS

1 DOCK YOUR FAVOURITE INFINITE PAINTER TOOLS

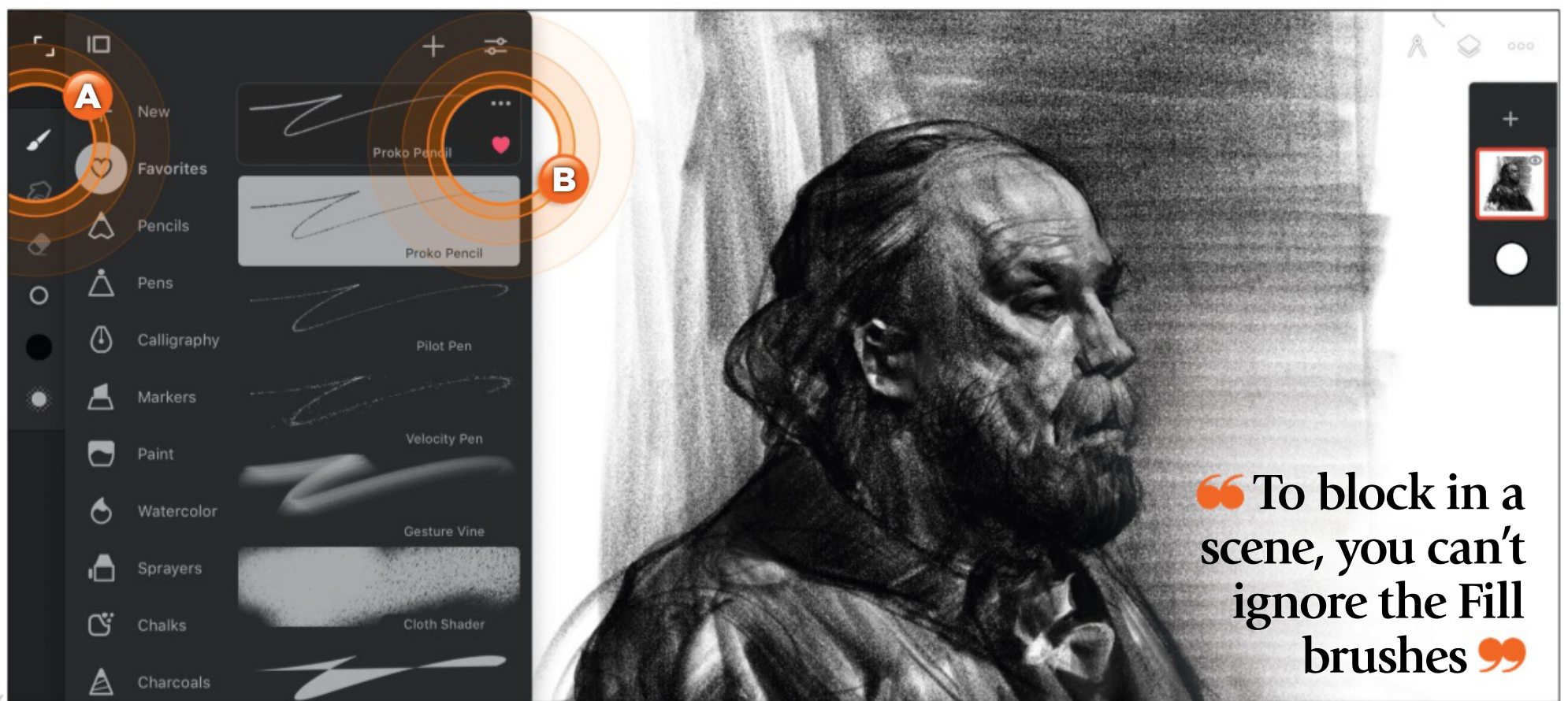
You may have noticed that my interface looks different than Andrew's. That's because I can dock my favourite tools to my main workspace with a custom toolbar that meets my needs. No more jumping through menus to find the tool I'm looking for! Just long-press on any tool icon (A) and drag it into the station at the top of the screen (B) beside the Tools icon (C). This works for options and layer functions like Clip or Merge as well. This time saver keeps me focused on my art. Edit your toolbar to fit your style!



2 LAY DOWN QUICK GESTURES

As a concept artist, everything is about speed and staying focused on what I'm sketching. When I want to focus, I tap four fingers to hide the interface. To change the brush size, I slide up or down with three fingers. To undo or redo, I tap

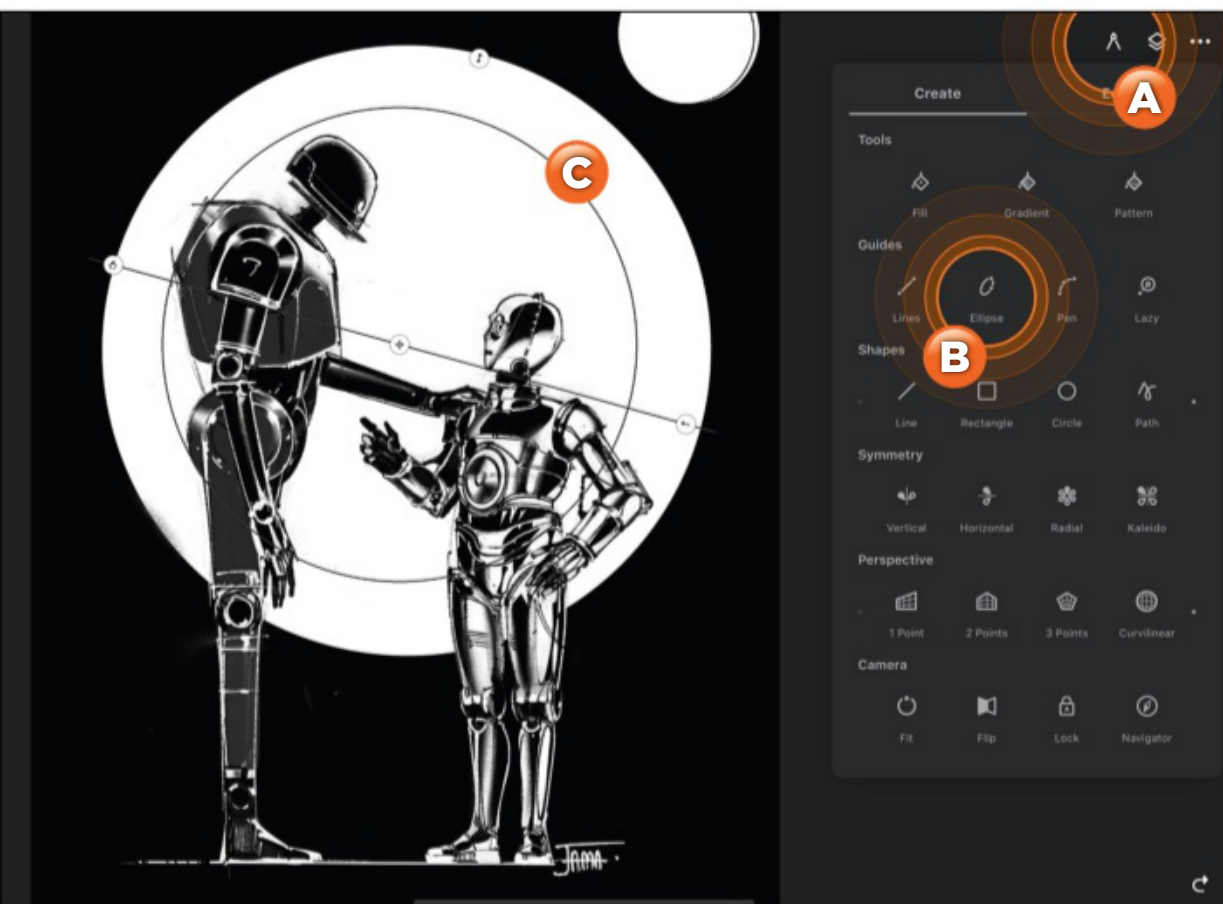
two fingers or three fingers. These are great, but my favourite is what you can do with the Finger mode in the Settings. I set mine to Blend. Now when I need to switch between sketching and blending, I press my thumb on the canvas to turn my brush into a blender. Crazy!



“To block in a scene, you can’t ignore the Fill brushes”

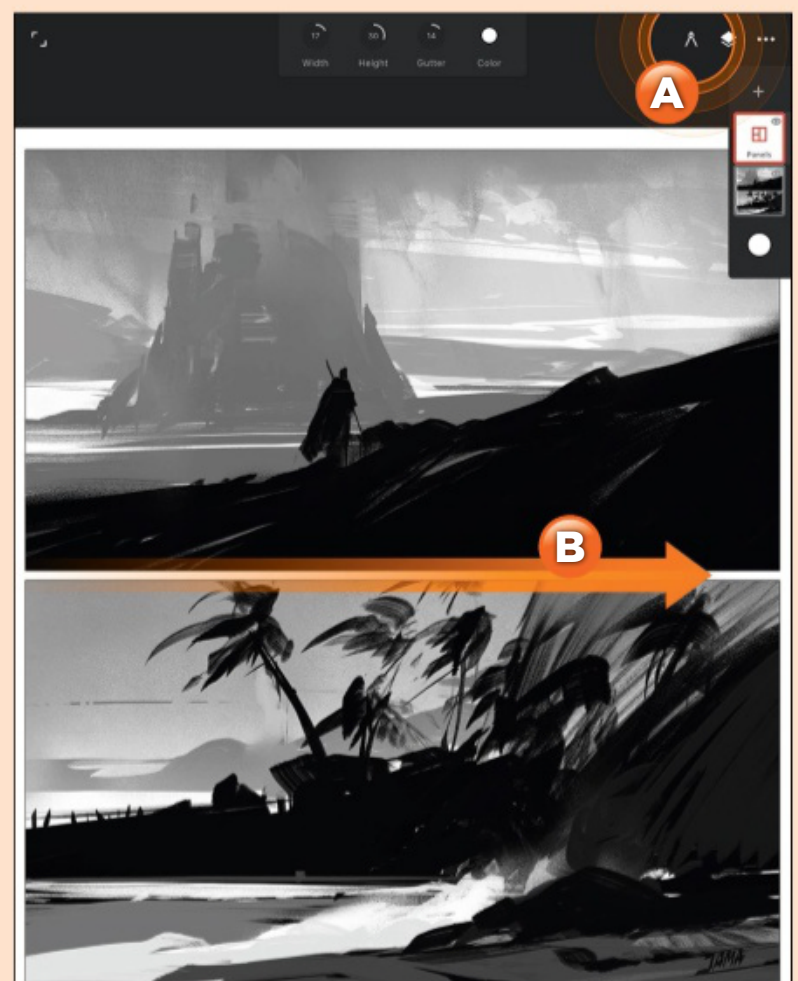
3 KEY BRUSHES TO GET YOU STARTED

To help you get painting I’m going to point out some of my favourite tools, which you can keep organised (A). For quick sketching and shading, try out the Proko Pencil (B) in the Pencils and the Gesture Vine in the Charcoals. These are great for strong gesture strokes and tilt shading (lay your pencil flat). The Velocity Pen and the Pilot Pen in the Pens use a particle system that creates a neat pen-to-paper feel. To block in a scene, you can’t ignore the Fill brushes.



4 SHAPING OUT YOUR IDEAS

After doing a rough sketch, I use the app’s shapes and guides to construct the final design. The shapes are live until you tap away from them or drag out a new shape, meaning you can adjust brush properties or even change the brush (A and B) to find out what works best for your piece. If you’re carving out your line work, you have to try the Lazy Guide (C). It drags the brush behind the stylus to create smooth lines and sharp corners. Or try out the Pen guide and Path shape – these tools make creating tight line-work a breeze!



5 THE PANELS TOOL

Infinite Painter is constantly evolving with new tools and features. Click the Tools button (A) and select the Panels tool (B) to create a frame around the canvas. It enables you to divide the canvas into panels by slicing from one end of the frame to the other end. This is great when creating thumbnails, planning out sequences, and for creating comics. After you’re finished, the tool creates a Panels adjustment layer that you can re-edit any time by selecting it in the Layers panel.

Fresco GET MORE FROM ADOBE FRESCO



Illustrator **Phil Galloway** shows you how to bring expression, life and texture to your portraiture using Adobe's newest painting app

Artist PROFILE

Phil Galloway
LOCATION: England

Phil is a contemporary fine and digital artist based in Cheshire, north-west England. He specialises in portraiture with a focus on expressive realism.
<https://ifxm.ag/philg>

**GET YOUR
RESOURCES**

See page 8 now!

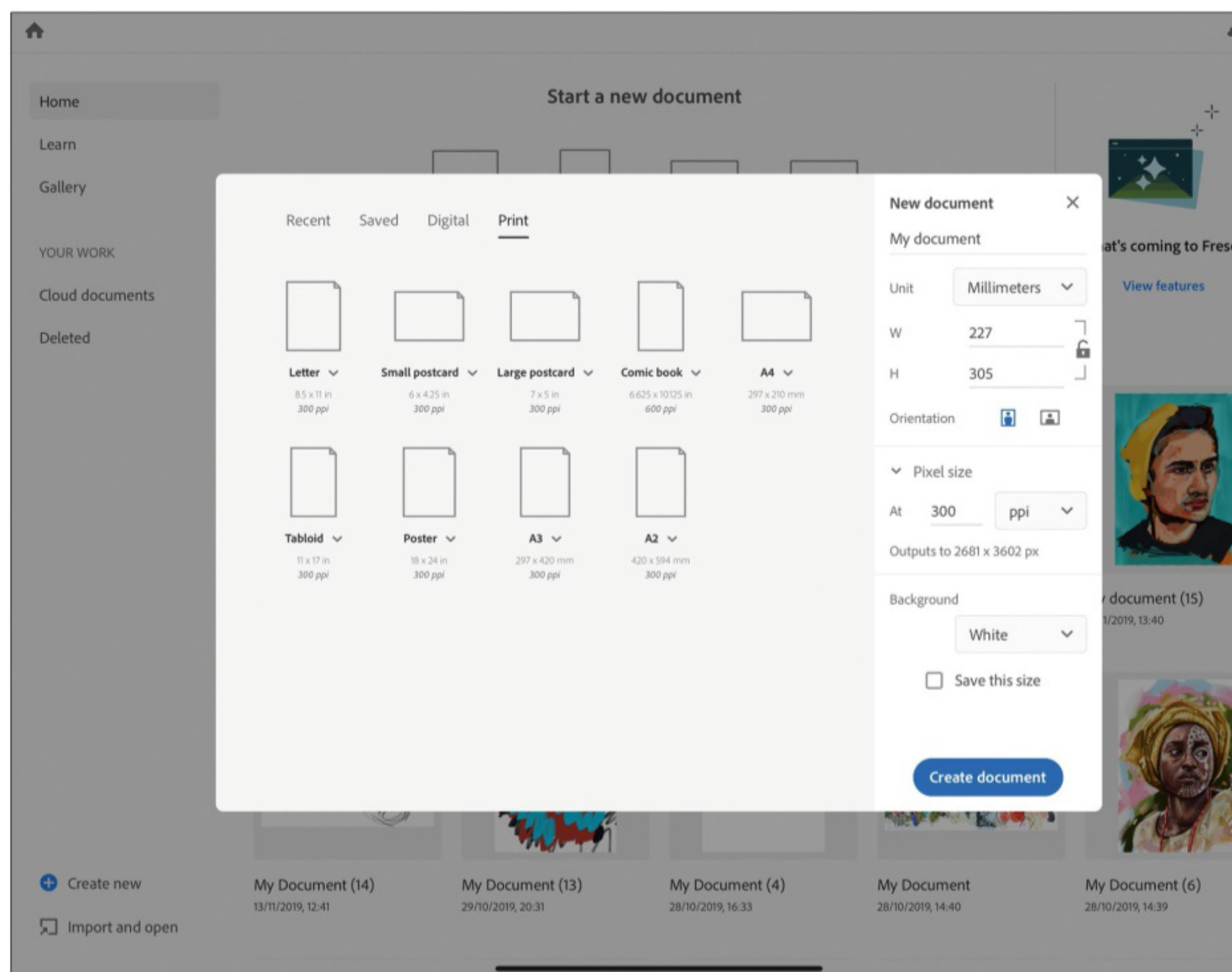


For this workshop I'll be using Fresco to create a vibrant and emotive portrait, showing how different techniques and textures can be used in the app to bring life and realism to

your art. From rough pencil sketch through to splashy loose brushwork, I'll reveal how you can get the most from Fresco's fantastic brushes.

I'll be painting a man with paint running down his face, but the basic sketching and painting techniques

can be applied to any subject of your choice. The array of brushes in Fresco can be initially daunting, but do experiment and have fun with each brush and their settings. Just like Bob Ross used to say, it's all about those happy little accidents!



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

FRESCO

**DEFAULT BRUSHES:
RUFFIN BRUSH**

Dry brush used to create messy flourishes and grunge textures.

PENCIL

Used for sketching in initial pencil lines and rough drawing.

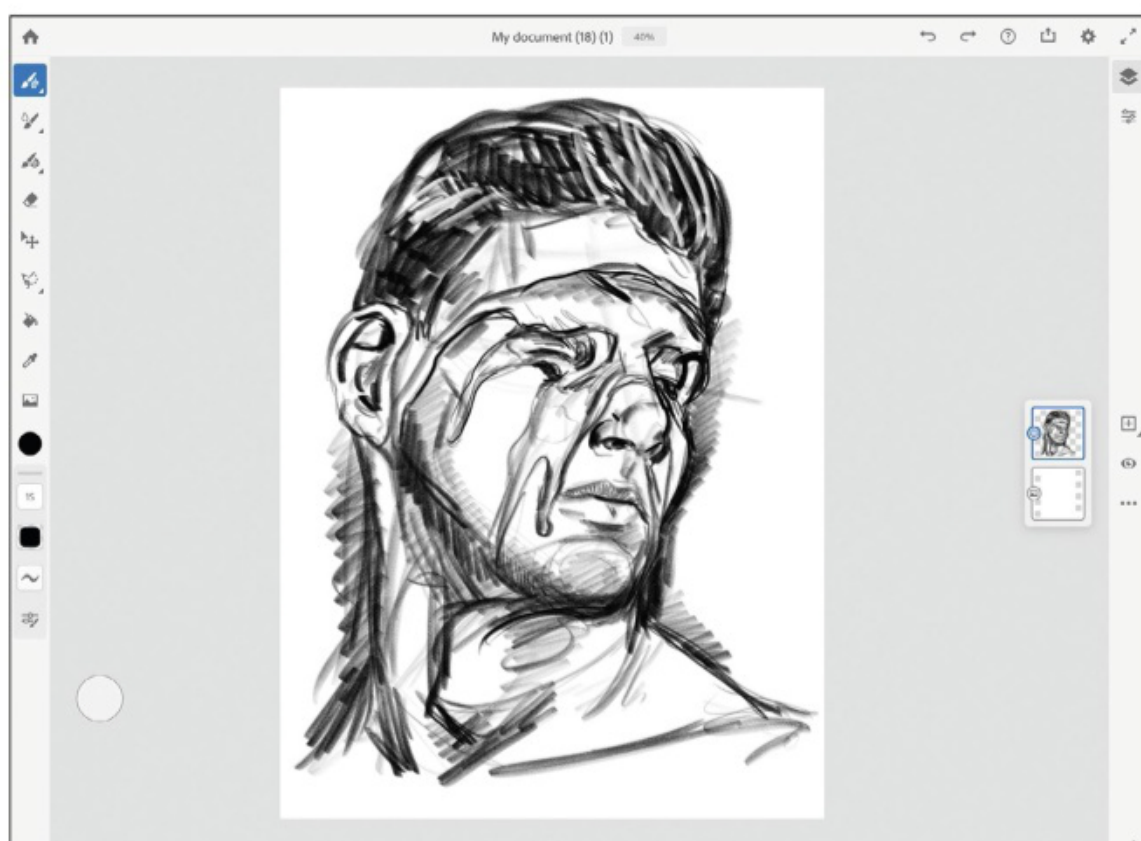
OILPAINT SHORT

Used to block in shapes and base paint textures. Works loosely and fast.

1 Open a new file
The Fresco home screen and interface is easy to navigate even when using for the first time, so setting up my document is no problem. I first choose Custom Size under the 'Start a new document' header and am offered a plethora of canvas sizes by Fresco. Pick the one suited to

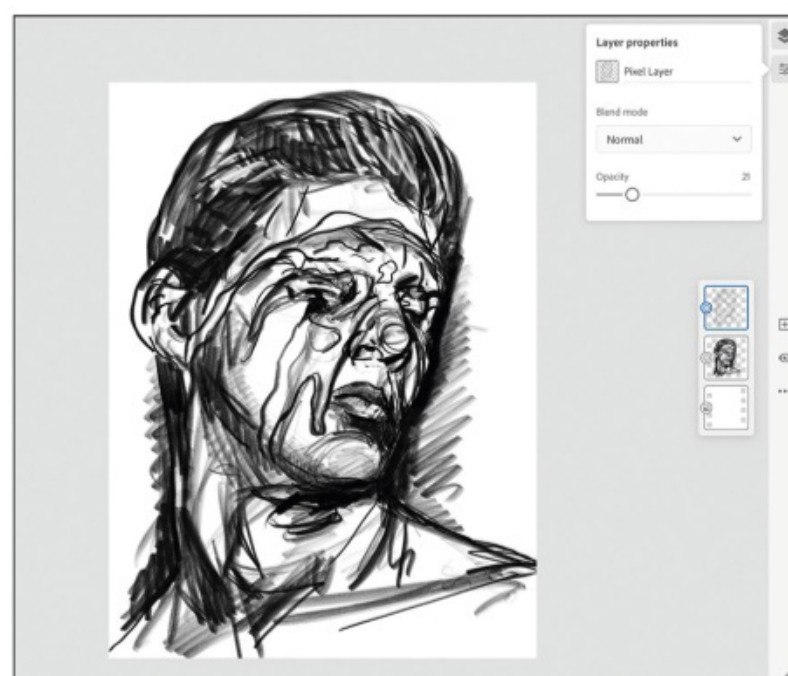
your needs, but for this workshop I set my Units to Millimetres and Paper Size to 227x 305mm. I then change the Pixel size to 300ppi to ensure the finished result is detailed enough and could work for both online purposes and print. After clicking Create document my fresh canvas is made ready for working on. ➡➡





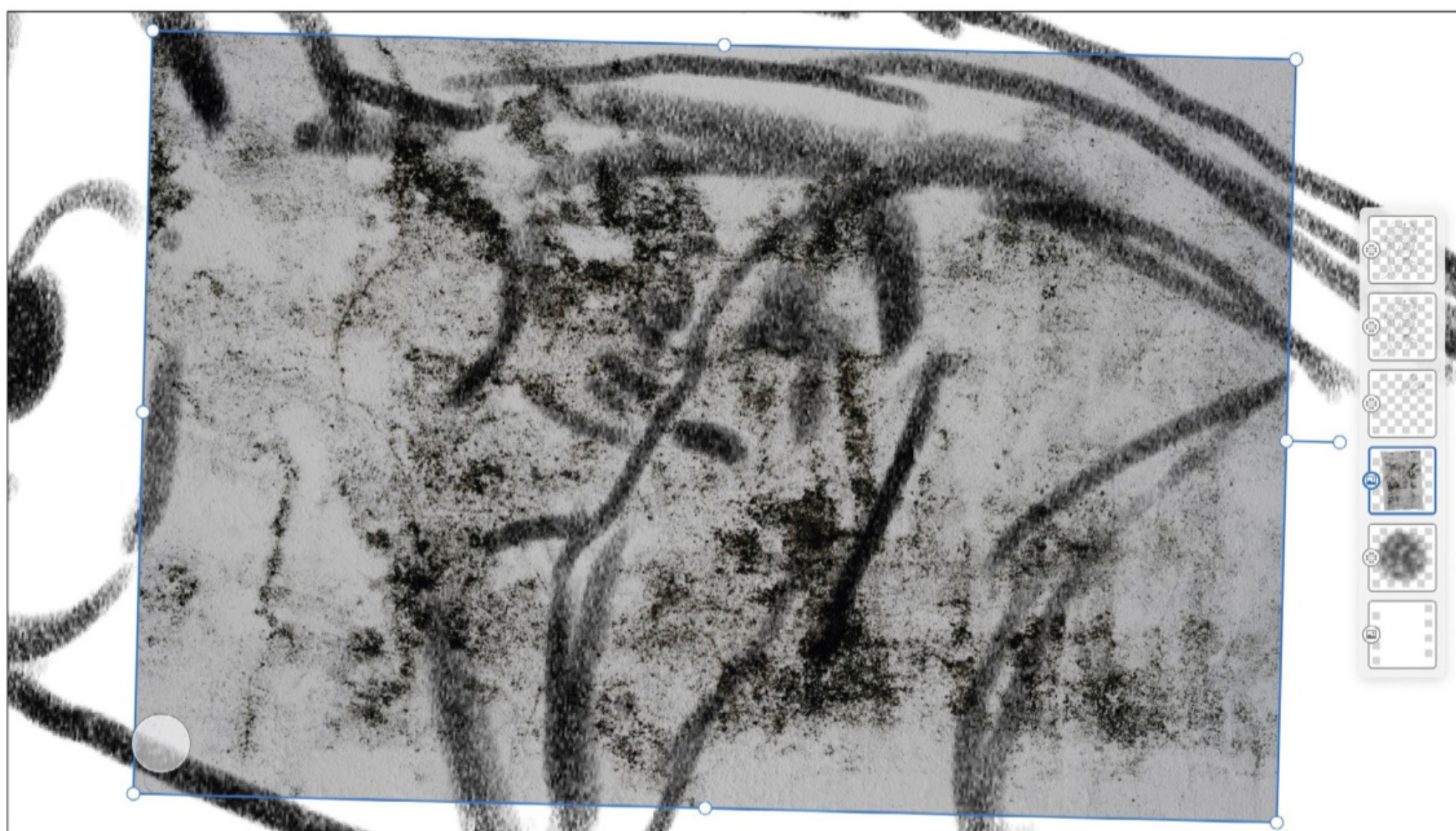
2 Sketch in my pencil rough

I like to work fast and loose with the Pencil Tool, feeling out the shapes and forms as I go. I select the Pixel Brushes, scroll down to select the Sketching tab and choose the Pencil Tool. In the Brush Settings panel I set the width to around 15px and leave all other settings as they are. I then begin to sketch in the head marking out the top and bottom of roughly where I'd like the portrait to sit in the canvas. I don't worry about mistakes: these will be left in, adding texture to the piece.



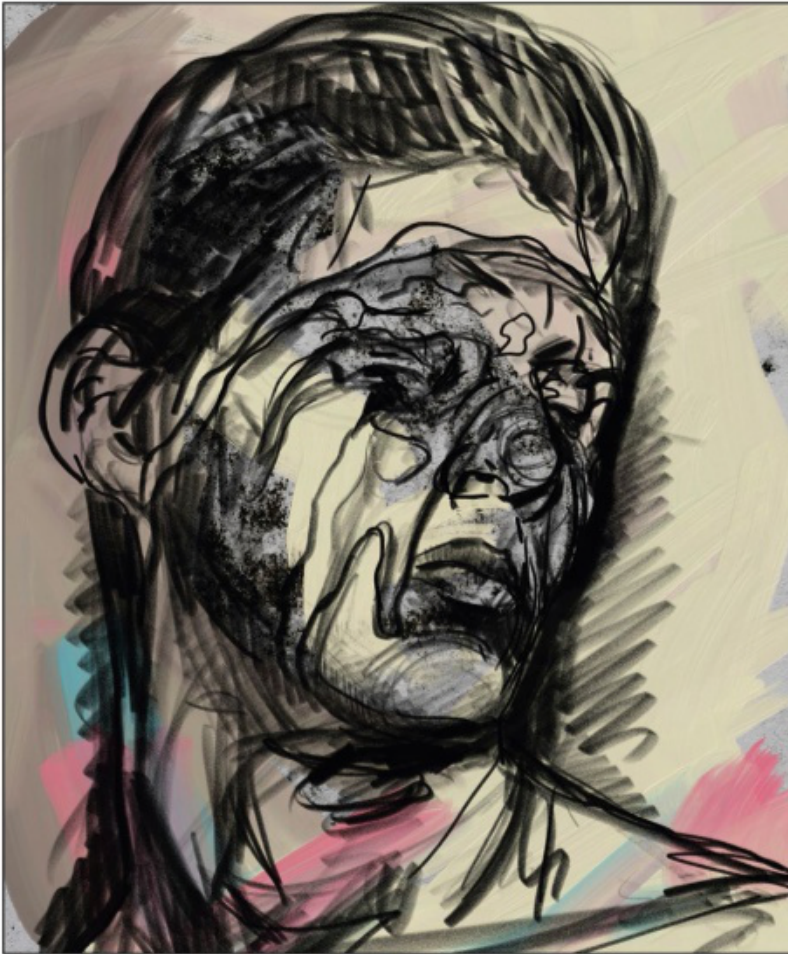
3 Refine sketch and duplicate layer

Once I've roughly sketched in the basic shapes, I begin to hone the detail and emphasise the shadow areas that will help me when I come to paint the face. I then click the Layer Actions tab and select Duplicate Layer; another copy of my current layer is created on top of the layers stack. I then select the top new layer, click the Layer Properties button and reduce the Opacity of the top layer to around 40 per cent. This means when I come to add paint I can keep this pencil guide visible on top as I work and not just cover up my pencil work with loose paint.



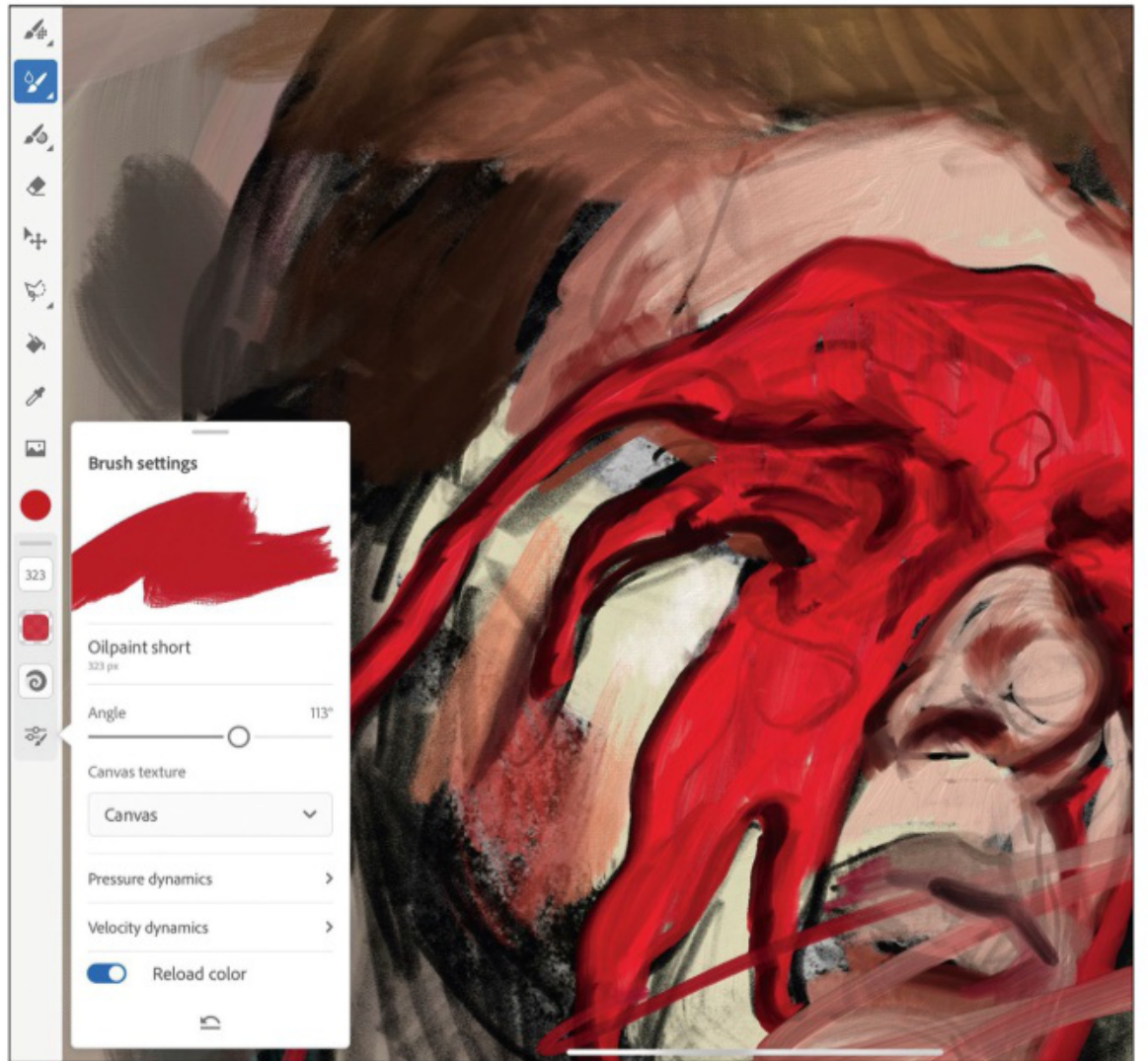
4 Use a stock photo to develop a custom background texture

Fresco doesn't enable users to set their canvas to a chosen texture, so I must create my own 'ground' to work on. I select the bottom layer in the layer stack and then click the Plus button, which creates a new layer underneath all the others. I want the finished painting to be gritty so I import a textured background from the royalty free stock texture photo website Pixabay (www.pixabay.com). I import my photo by clicking the image icon on the left-hand tab, selecting Photos and choosing the texture. I then size up my image to fit my canvas.



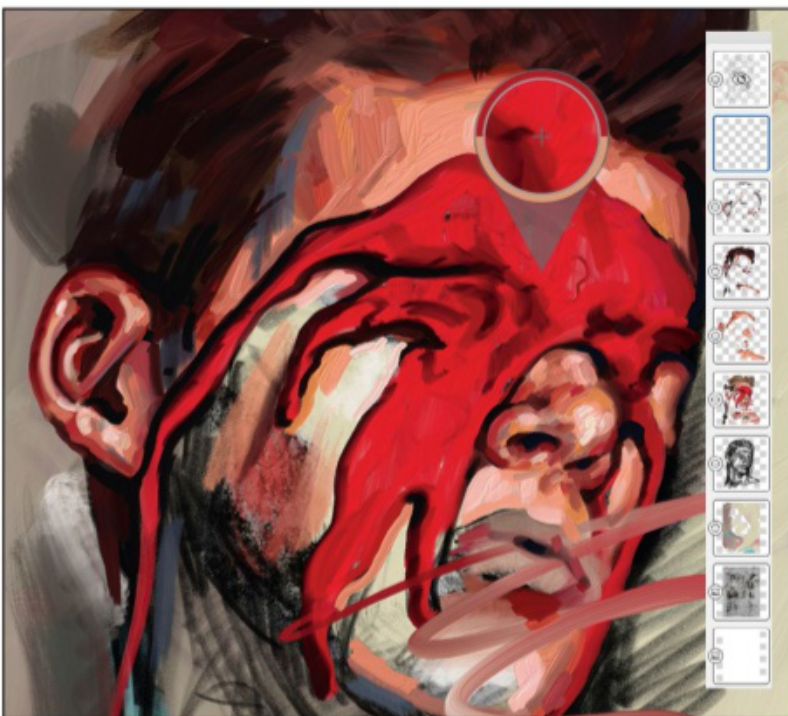
5 Build up a colour base

I need to add some splashy brushstrokes that not only add interest and vibrancy, but also make painting a little easier than simply working on bare white canvas. I create a new layer just above the textured grunge one, then select the Live Brushes. I pick Oilpaint Short, increase the size of the brush and select my colours using the Color Wheel by tapping on the colour spot on the left. I try to work loosely and swiftly, because this stage is all about building the work up rather than detailing.



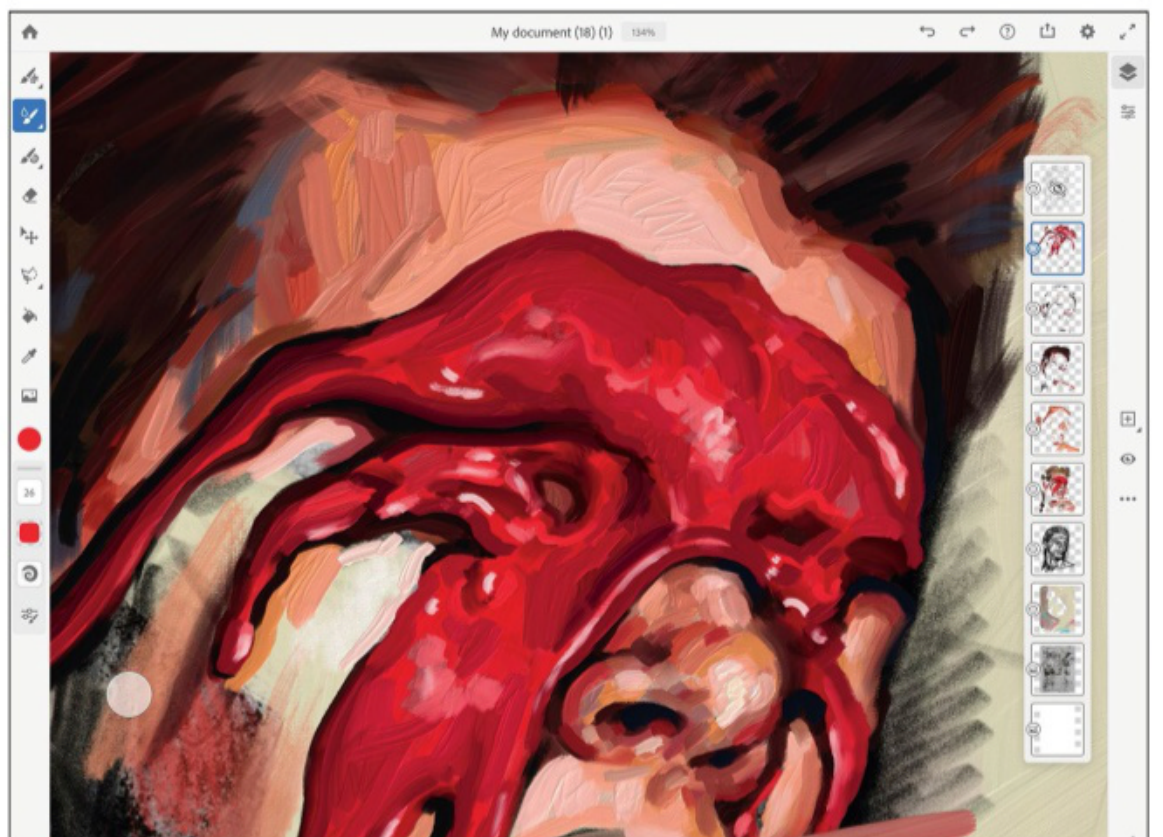
6 Blocking in colour

I create a new layer between my two pencil layers and select the Oilpaint Short tool again, this time reducing the size a little so I have more control. I loosely block in colour values, basic shapes and shadows. Then I switch to the Oilpaint Elbert brush and lift the pressure off my stylus towards the end of each stroke to create a wispy, paint running-out effect. I work swiftly during this stage because my pencil layer is still on top to guide me for the more detailed work that's to come.



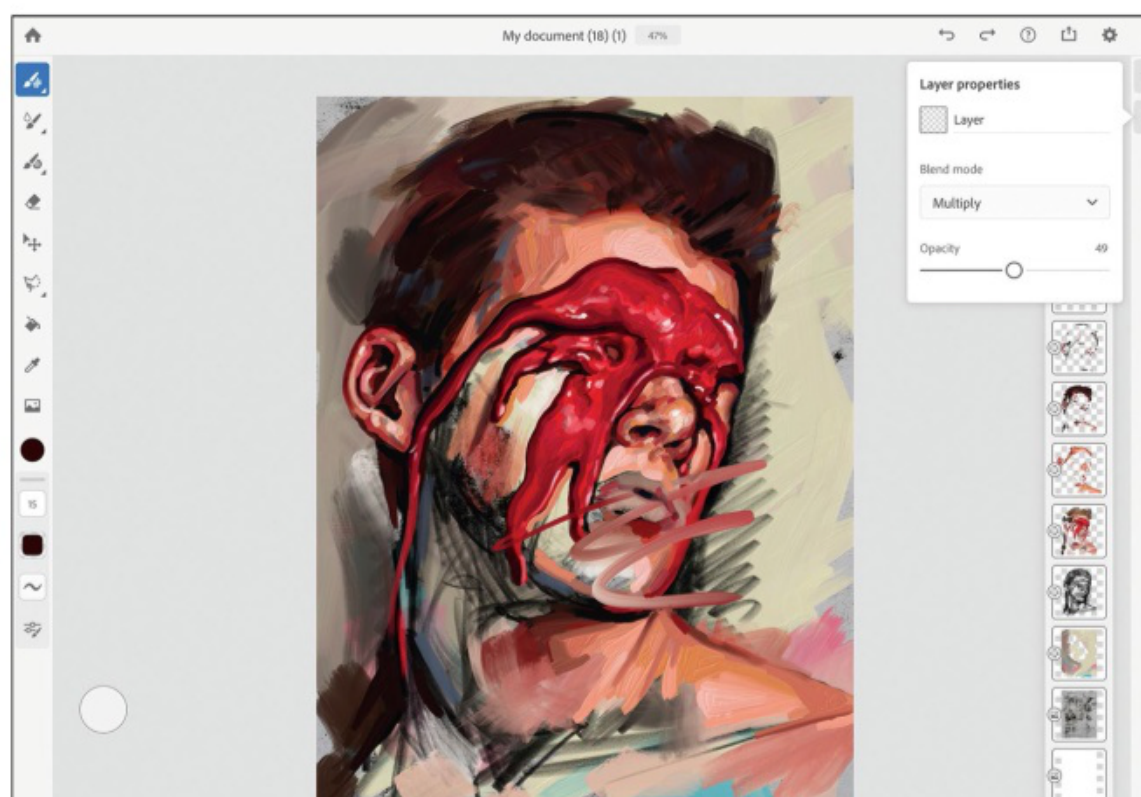
7 Adding detail and texture

I create a new layer on top of the blocking-in layer. Then I pick the Oilpaint Chunky brush and use the Color Picker tool by pressing down on the area of colour I wish to select. Next, I add more structural and detailed brushstrokes that have a lot more texture to them. I also adjust the angle of the brush head. This alters the strokes' direction of texture and blending, giving the impression that I'm painting from different angles on a real canvas.



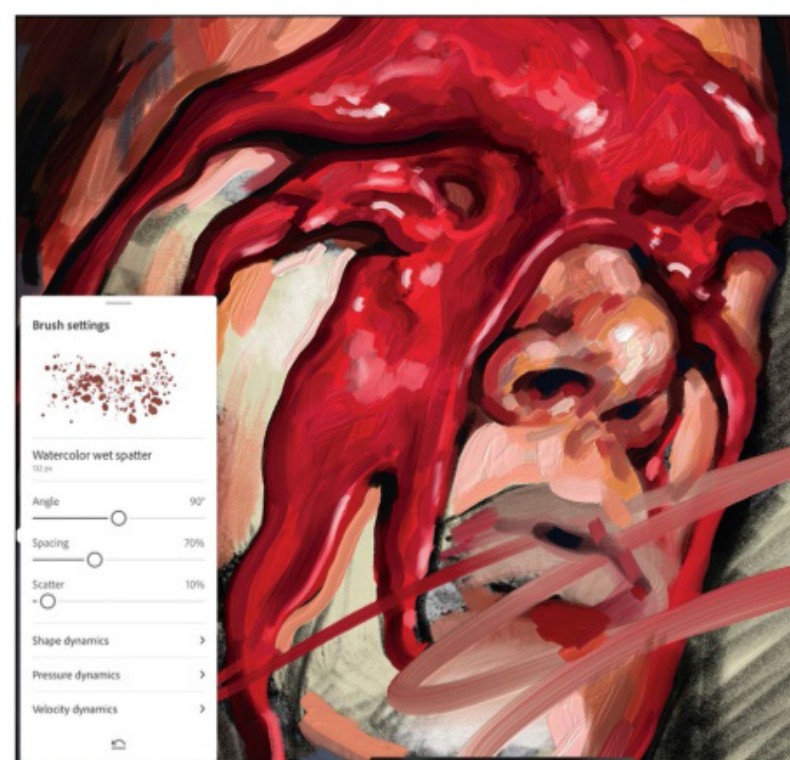
8 Highlights and shadows

Now I have my detail I can hide the top pencil layer. I'll keep it there just in case it comes in handy at some point, but it's done its job for now. I create a new layer on top of the detailed paint and select the Oilpaint Chunky brush with Flow turned down a little. Then I begin to pick out the shadows and darkest elements of the painting along with dabs of white and pinks to highlight the brightest areas. ➡



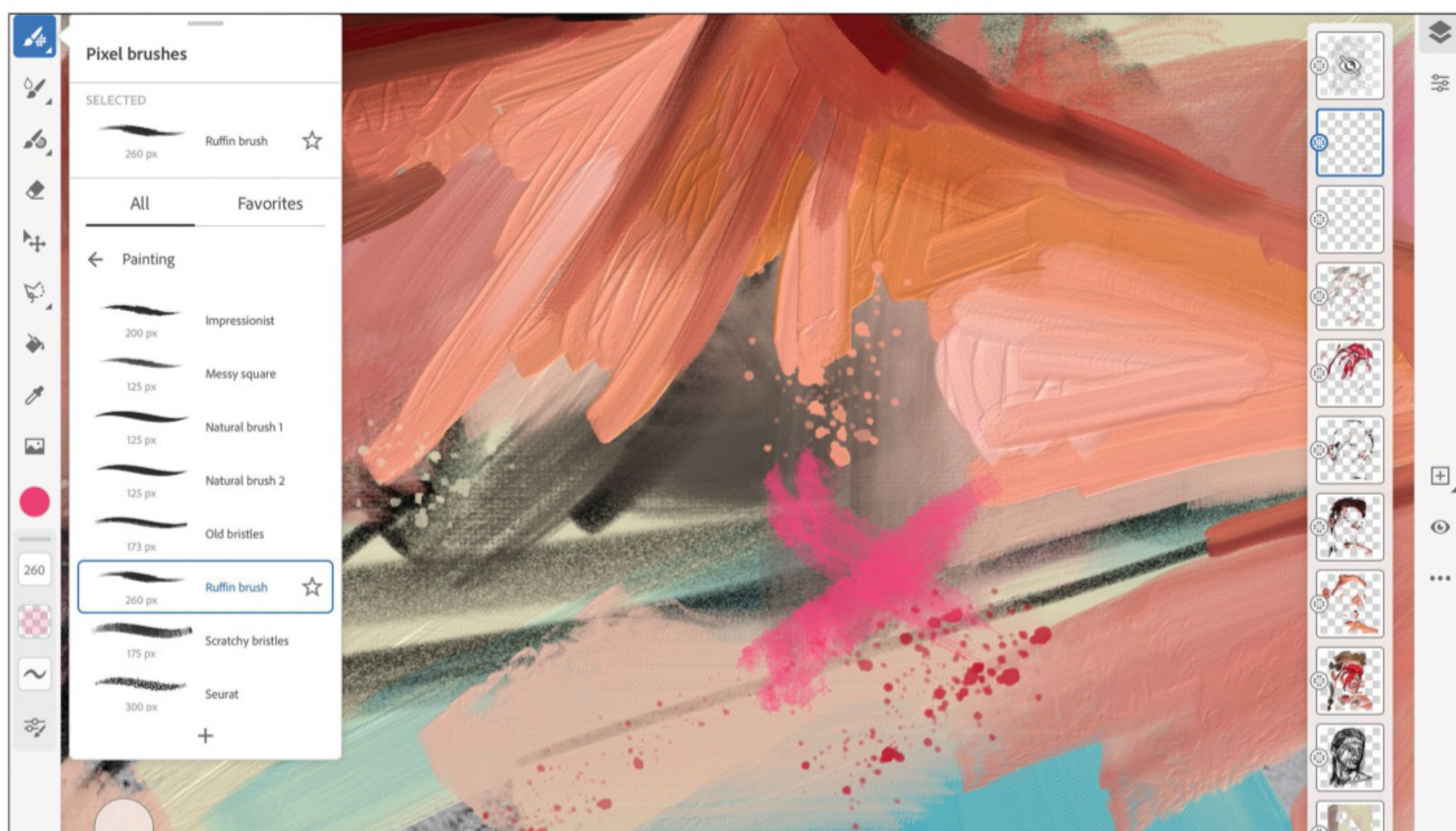
9 Multiply shadows

The main structure of the portrait is looking good and I'm happy to let my textures, pencil strokes and base colours poke through in certain areas. However, I want to add more depth to the work and make the face look more three dimensional, so I create a new layer and change its mode to Multiply. I then set its Opacity to between 40 and 50 per cent. I select a medium tone for each element of the picture – brown for the hair, ochre for the skin and crimson for the red paint – and begin to paint in the shadow areas again with the Live Oilpaint brushes.



10 Paint splashes and chaos

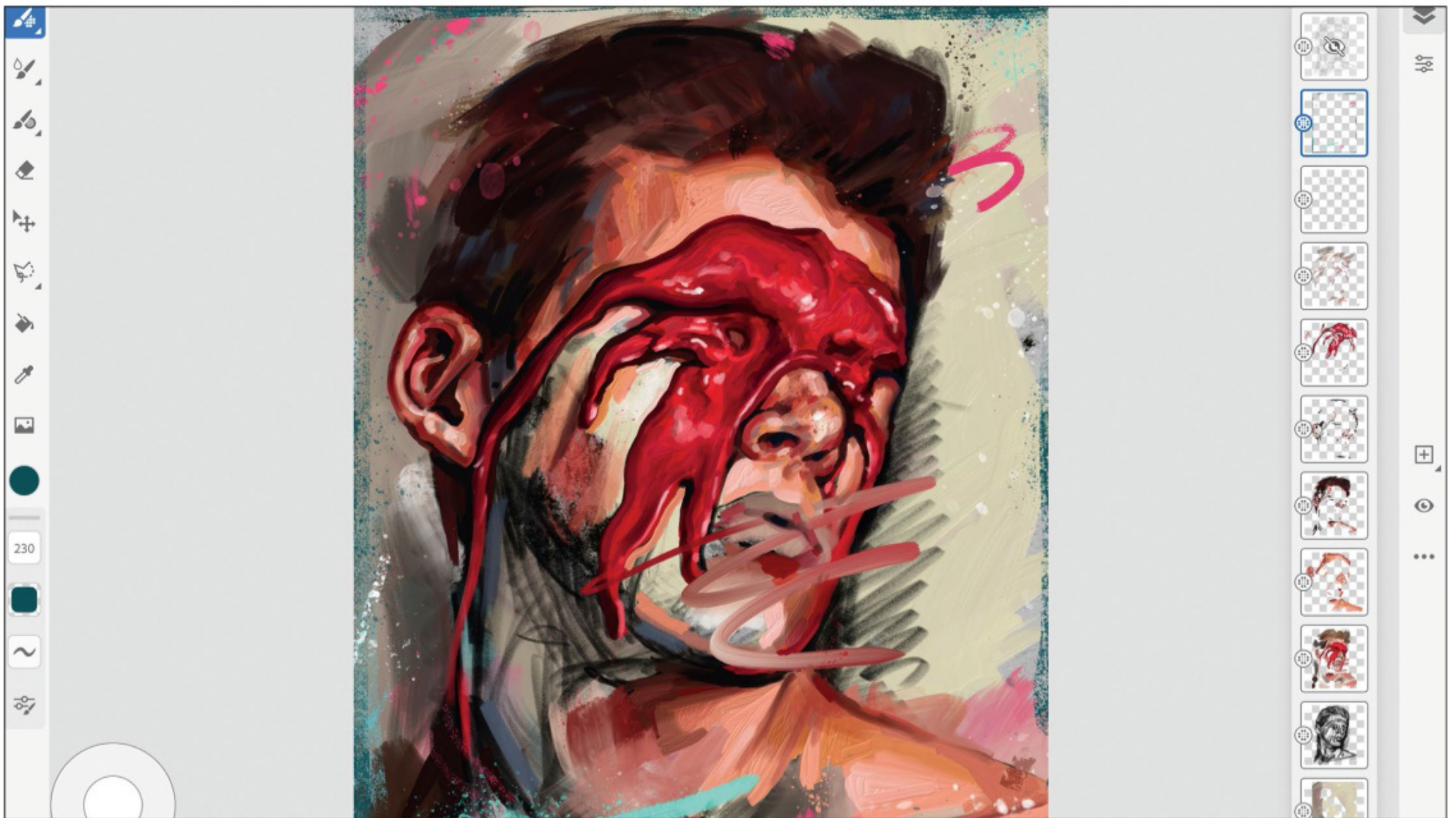
I decide to convey the looseness of my brushstrokes and add a little randomness to the piece with splashes, so I select the Live Watercolour Wet Splatter brush and increase the Spacing and Size in the Brush Setting panel on the left. Then I delicately apply splashes and drops to areas that may have caused a splash if I were painting this in real life (and no doubt creating a bit of a mess in my home studio in the process).



11 Create grunge textures using Pixel brushes

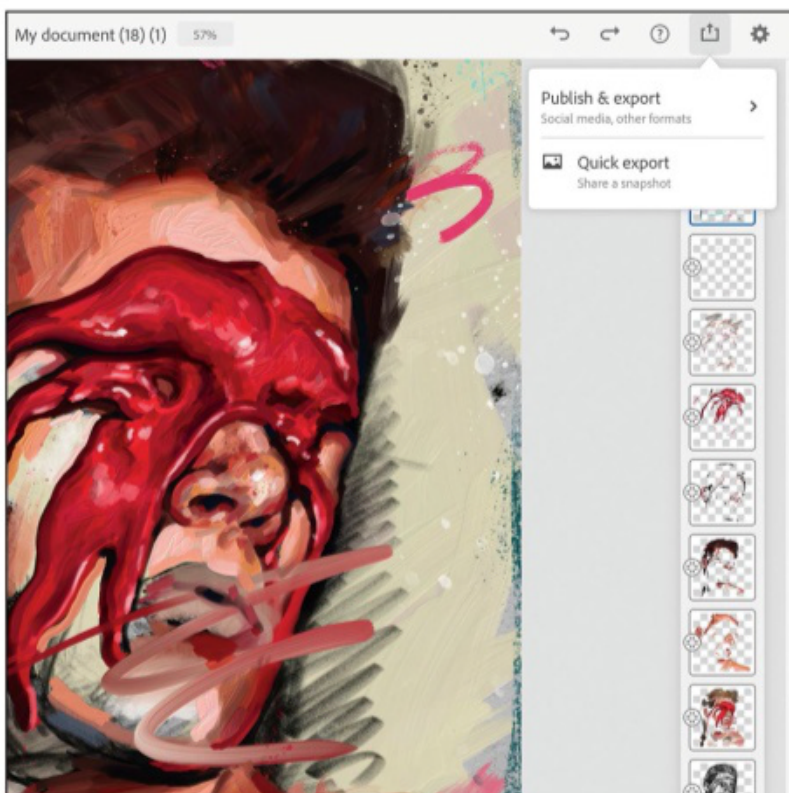
To ramp up the texture and movement I create a new layer and click the Pixel brushes, selecting the Painting tab. I choose the Ruffin brush, which creates a dry brush effect with no impasto – perfect for quick emotive shapes. I loosely draw and flick paint around the canvas,

adding interesting shapes and pulling the pressure off at the end of the stroke to add the painterly effect. Again, within the Pixel brush tab I select the FX>Inksplat brush. I set this brush to be huge and paint in from just off the side of the canvas. This enables drop of ink and paint to splash on to my canvas without revealing the stroke that made them.



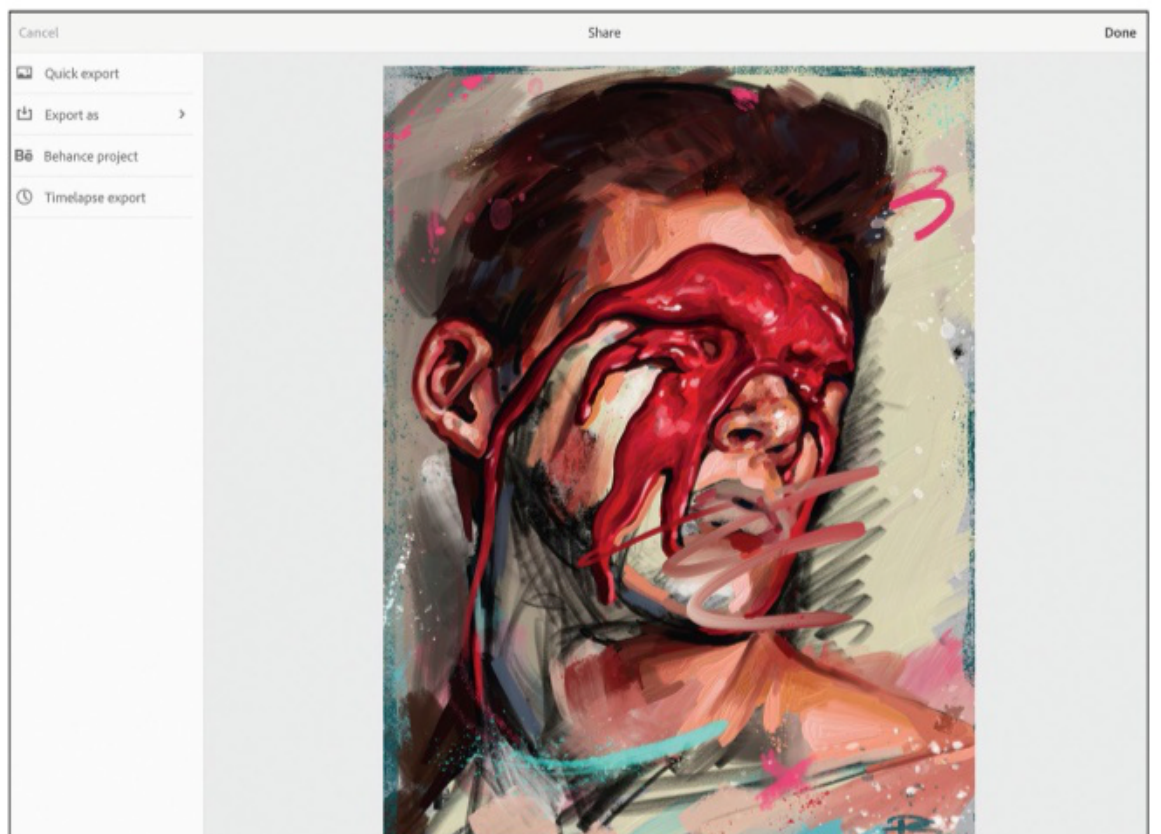
12 Erase using the Touch Shortcut tool

I select the Pixel Brushes tool and one of the rougher brushes and then, using the new Touch Shortcut tool, I press one finger on the floating button in the bottom left of the workspace and begin to erase areas. This button is contextual and does a different job depending on what tool you're using. When I push and hold on the button it enables me to erase using whatever brush I'm painting with. I want to erase areas, but keep the texture and avoid creating a blunt-erased edge. The solution is to erase using textured brushes.



13 Quick export

I've now completed my work so I need to share it. One new option in Fresco is the option to Quick Export and share a snapshot of your work. In the top bar I select Quick Export. I'm offered a variety of options to save my image into my photos or share it quickly via messages, Mail, Twitter and so on. For updating clients quickly on commercial progress this tool will come in very handy.



14 Save file, publish and export

Again, clicking the Export button as described in step 13 I then select Publish and Export. Fresco offers me various options for my finished painting for exporting as a PNG, JPG, PSD or PDF. I can also export direct to a Behance project or export my Time-lapse showing my painting process from start to finish. It's also worth mentioning that when I click the Home button all my documents are automatically saved in Fresco and in the cloud, ready to be worked on again if needed.

Core Skills: Part 3

FLAME PAINTER'S PARTICLE SYSTEMS

Harvey Bunda explains how Flame Painter's particle systems make a range of effects possible, in part three of his series on the software

Artist PROFILE

Harvey Bunda
LOCATION: Philippines

Harvey is Gunship Revolution's creative director and co-founder. He's produced artworks for Marvel, Hasbro, Mattel, Lucasfilm and Wizards Of The Coast.
www.harveybunda.com



In this tutorial, we'll be going through the range of particle painting systems that feature in version 4 of Flame Painter. We'll also talk about how to use them and how to adjust their settings so you can achieve the effects you're looking for. The system has been designed to be intuitive, and enables artist of differing abilities to add eye-catching effects to their work. There's a range of brushes in each particle systems that are capable of creating flowing, whip-

lash, neon dots or even tentacle-like brushstrokes, suitable for any concept art or illustration project.

Let's take a quick look at the characteristics of Flame Painter's six particle systems:

Flame – this is the classic particle system that's been part of Flame Painter since the very first version of the software.

Ribbon – select this system to create a series of particles that look like they're swaying, waving or moving like a long piece of cloth blowing in the wind.

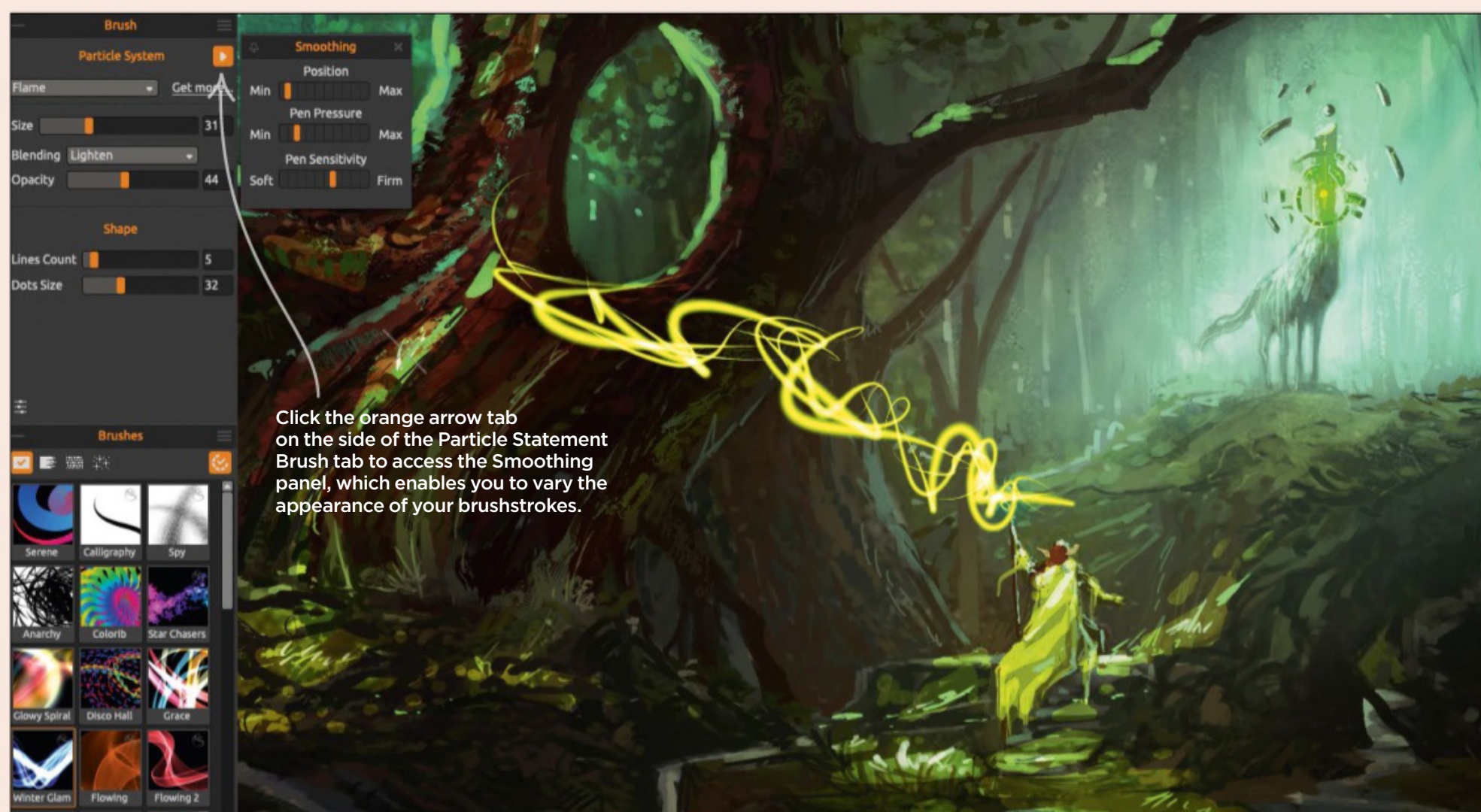
Follow – your particles follow the cursor precisely in this system.

Liner – this particle system has a thin flat brush profile with a defined width.

Elastic – a versatile particle system with an elastic brush cursor. It's useful for creating soft-body effects.

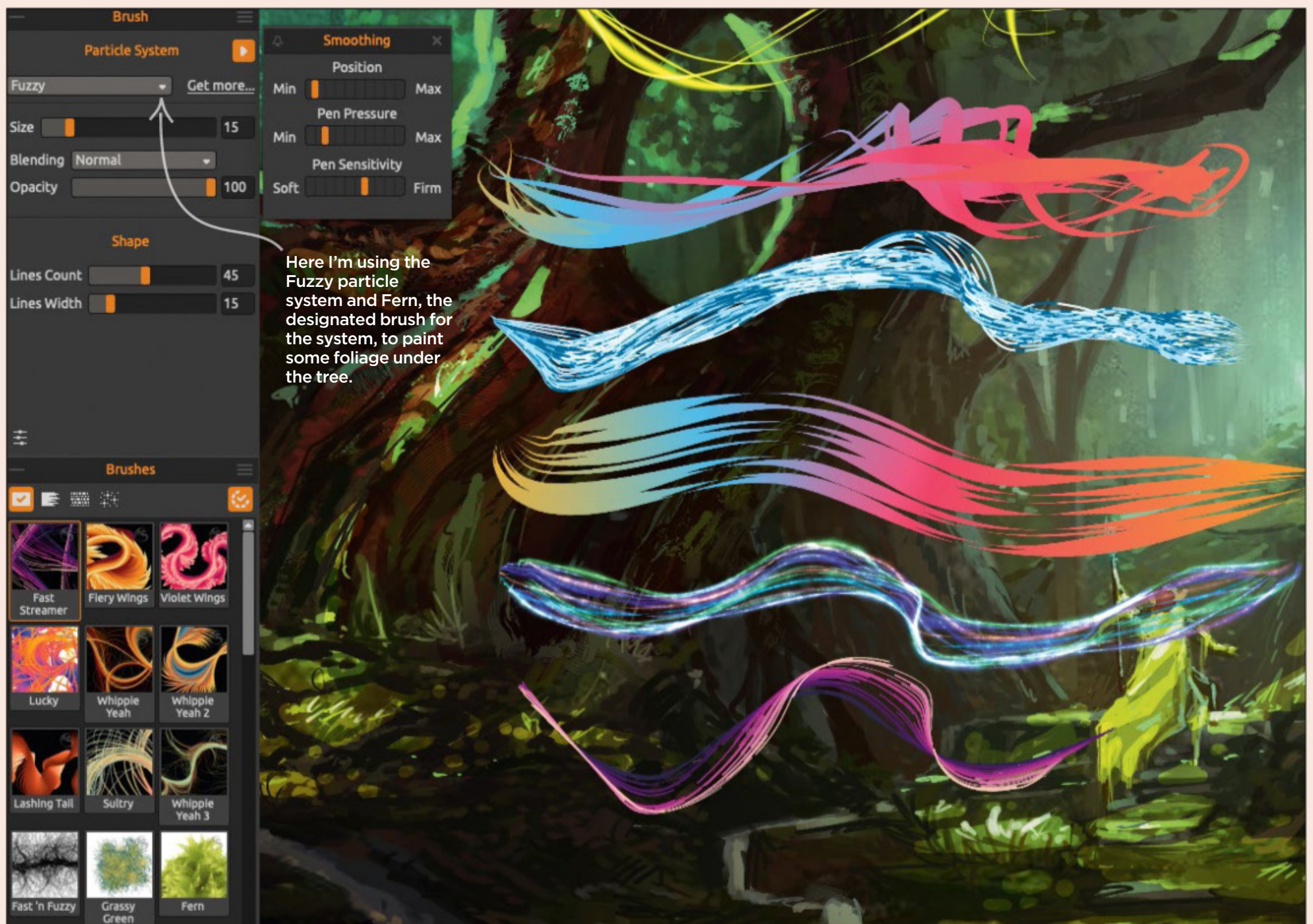
Fuzzy – a string-based winding particle system that can stretch its particles along your chosen path.

Each particle system has different sliders for editing your brush's properties, giving you almost limitless customisation options.



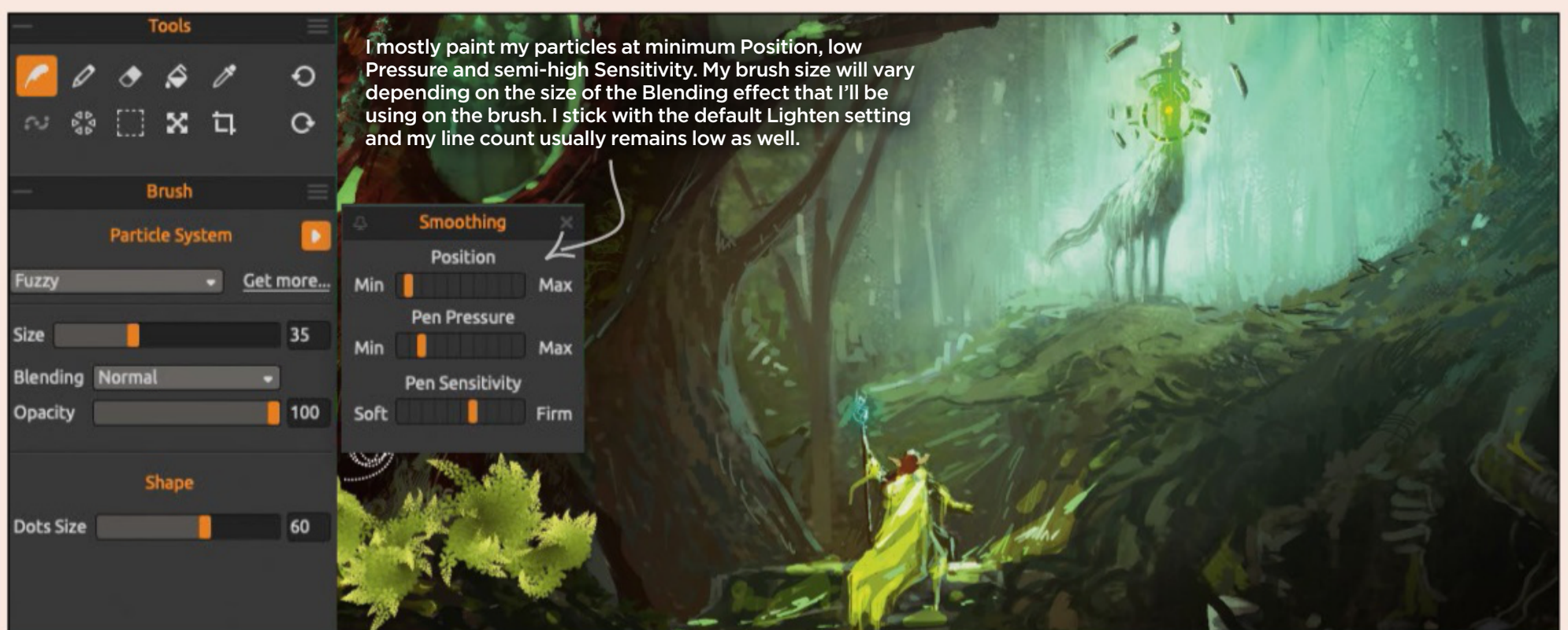
1 Get started with Flame Painter Particle systems

There are three particle systems that are included in the installation package: Flame, Ribbon and Follow. The other three – Liner, Fuzzy and Elastic – are available for download as paid add-ons available on the Escape Motions website, priced at £11 each.



2 Choose brushes to use with your particle system

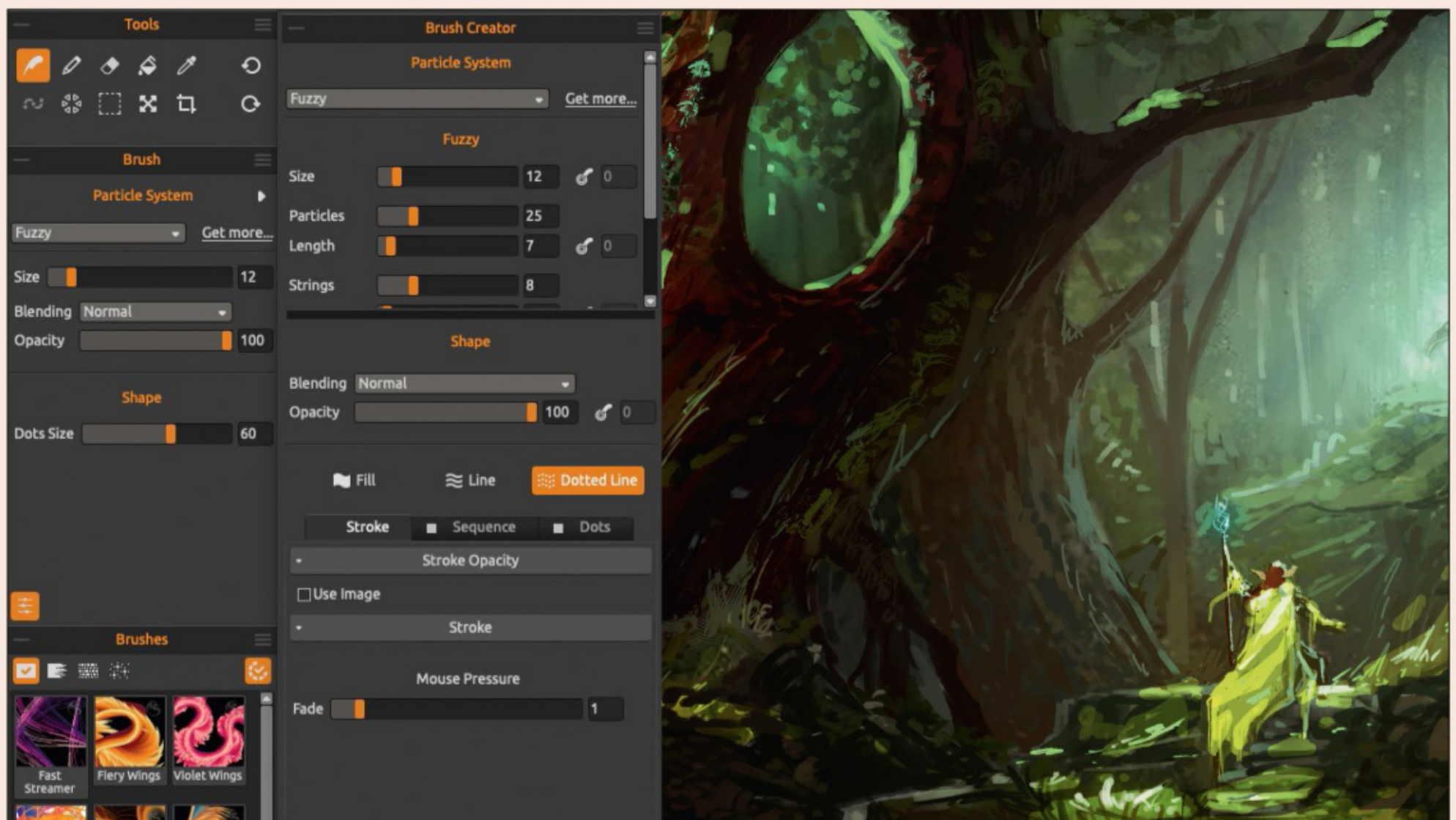
Flame Painter's brushes can be used to create all kinds of photo- and graphic effects. Each particle system comes with a set of brush presets, which means there are over 250 brushes to experiment with. There's also a free online Brush Library from where you can download new brushes.



3 Set the Size, Blending and Opacity of your particle brush

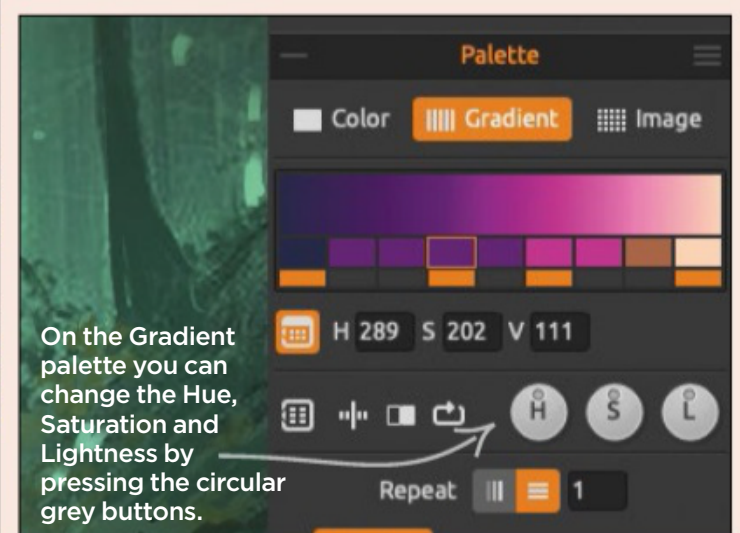
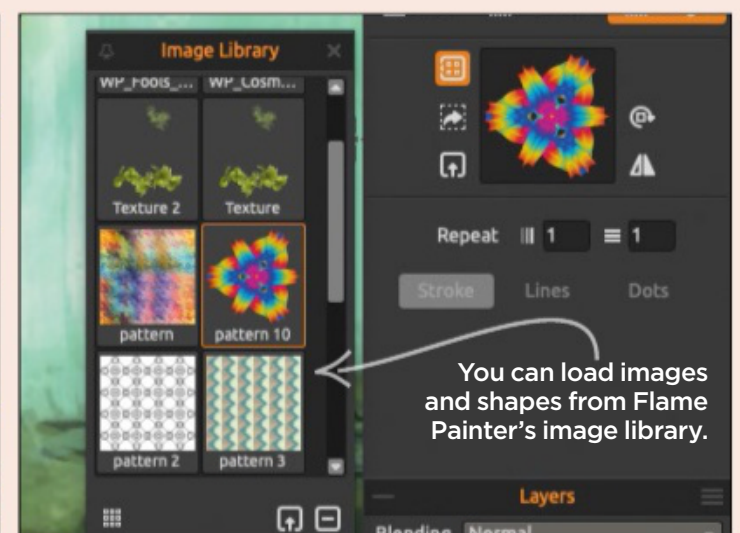
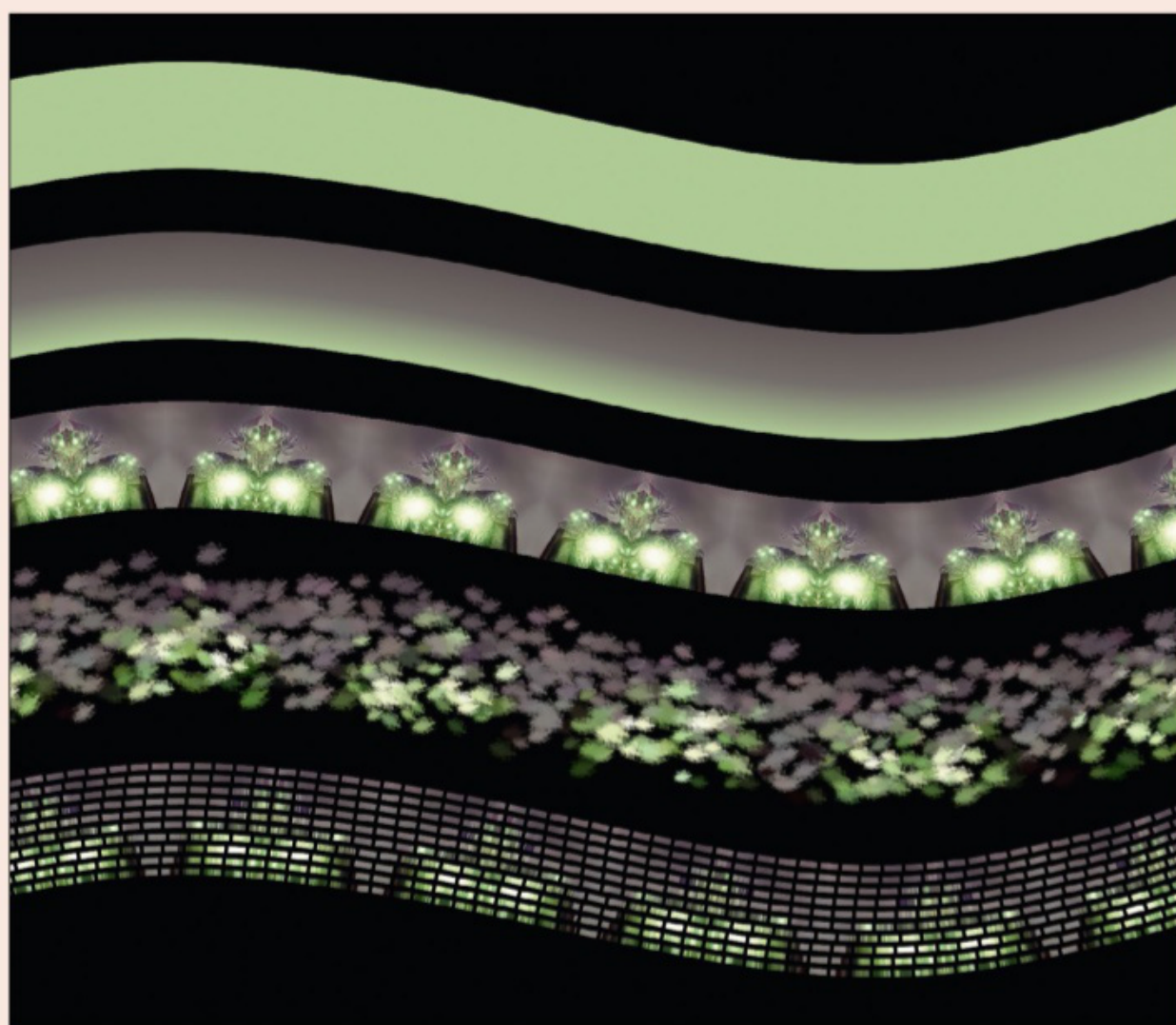
The Brush Properties panel has the three key settings for every brush in the particle system: Size, Blending and Opacity. There are three blending modes: Normal for regular painting; Lighten is usually for light effects and darker backgrounds; and Darken for lighter backgrounds. ➡

Workshops



4 Define the shape of your brush

Depending on which brush you're using, you can set the Count and Size of the lines or dots that influence the final appearance of the brush. Indeed, you can customise every parameter using the new Brush Creator panel – I recommend spending some time experimenting here.



5 Explore the Color palette settings

You can choose whether you want to paint with a solid colour, a gradient or with an image. The image will be mapped on the stroke, lines or dots and can be repeated on both the length and width of your strokes. HSV, RGB, HSL and HSLuv colour models are also available.

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Photoshop

NEW METHODS FOR PAINTING WET SKIN

Multi-disciplined artist **Antony Ward** reveals his techniques for painting wet skin and blending colours in his distinctive portrait pieces

Artist PROFILE

Antony Ward
LOCATION: England

Antony, also known as antCGi, has been creating digital content for decades, although he only recently discovered his love of digital art. www.antcgi.com



I'm primarily a 3D artist and have been since the early 90s. You may have even followed one of the many workshops I've created for 3D World magazine over the years. Even with this background in polygons and vertices, I've always had the desire to try more traditional art and get back to my roots.

For as long as I can remember this would be my New Year's resolution,

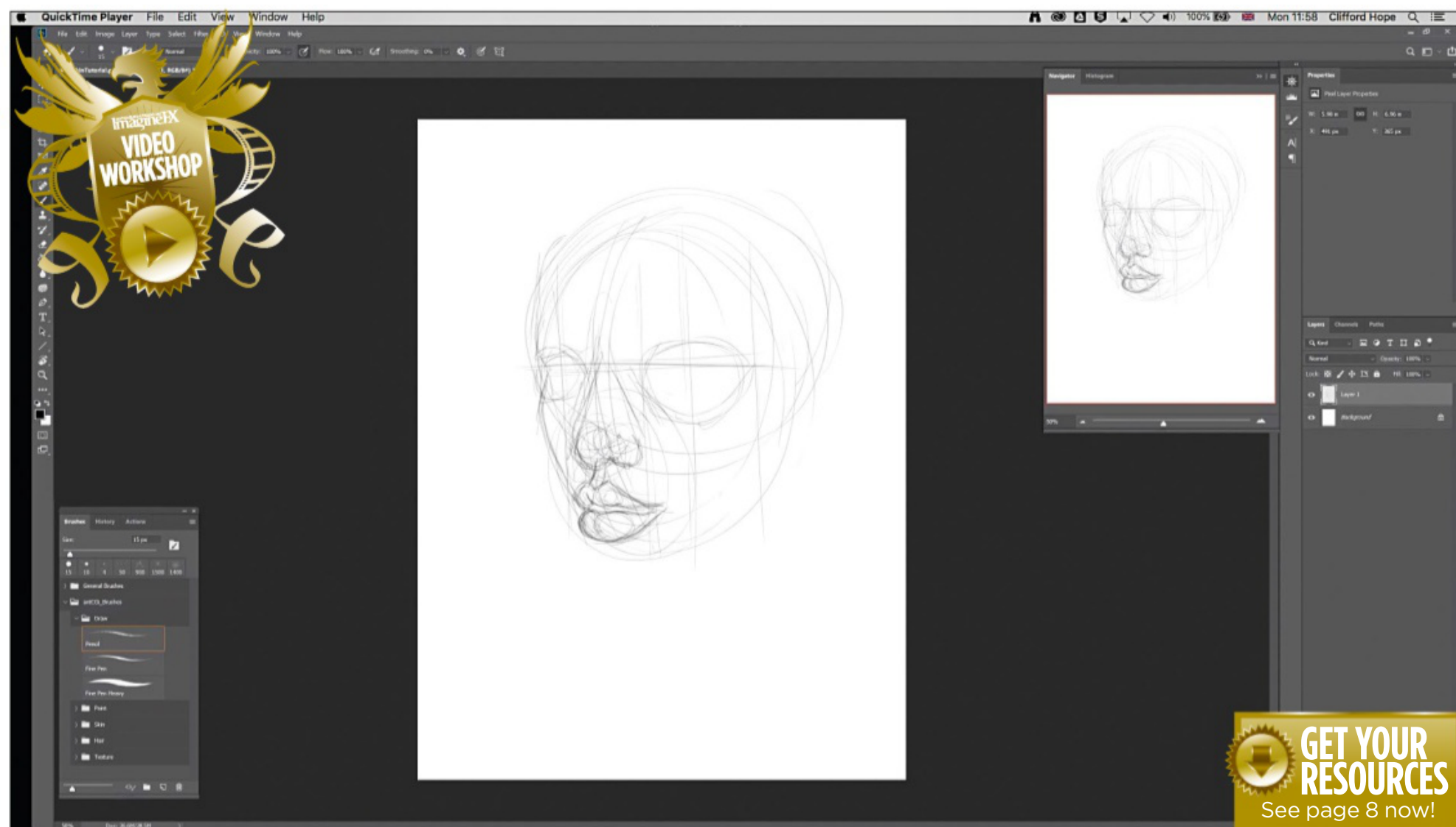
the year I'd start drawing again, but I never stuck to it. This was until 2016, which was the year I was determined to do it... and finally did!

I can happily say that I've been drawing and painting ever since. I came up with a realistic plan and followed it through to get me to where I am now. The plan was so successful that I've been asked repeatedly to share it.

I now regularly paint in my spare time, mainly creating stylised

portraits because that's what I enjoy doing – but it's important to just be creating. Over this time, I've experimented with various techniques and brushes. I've come up with a system that works for me when painting skin, hair and eyes, and I use this with all my portraits.

With this workshop I want to share my process for painting wet skin, while demonstrating how I blend colours without the use of fancy tools or brushes.

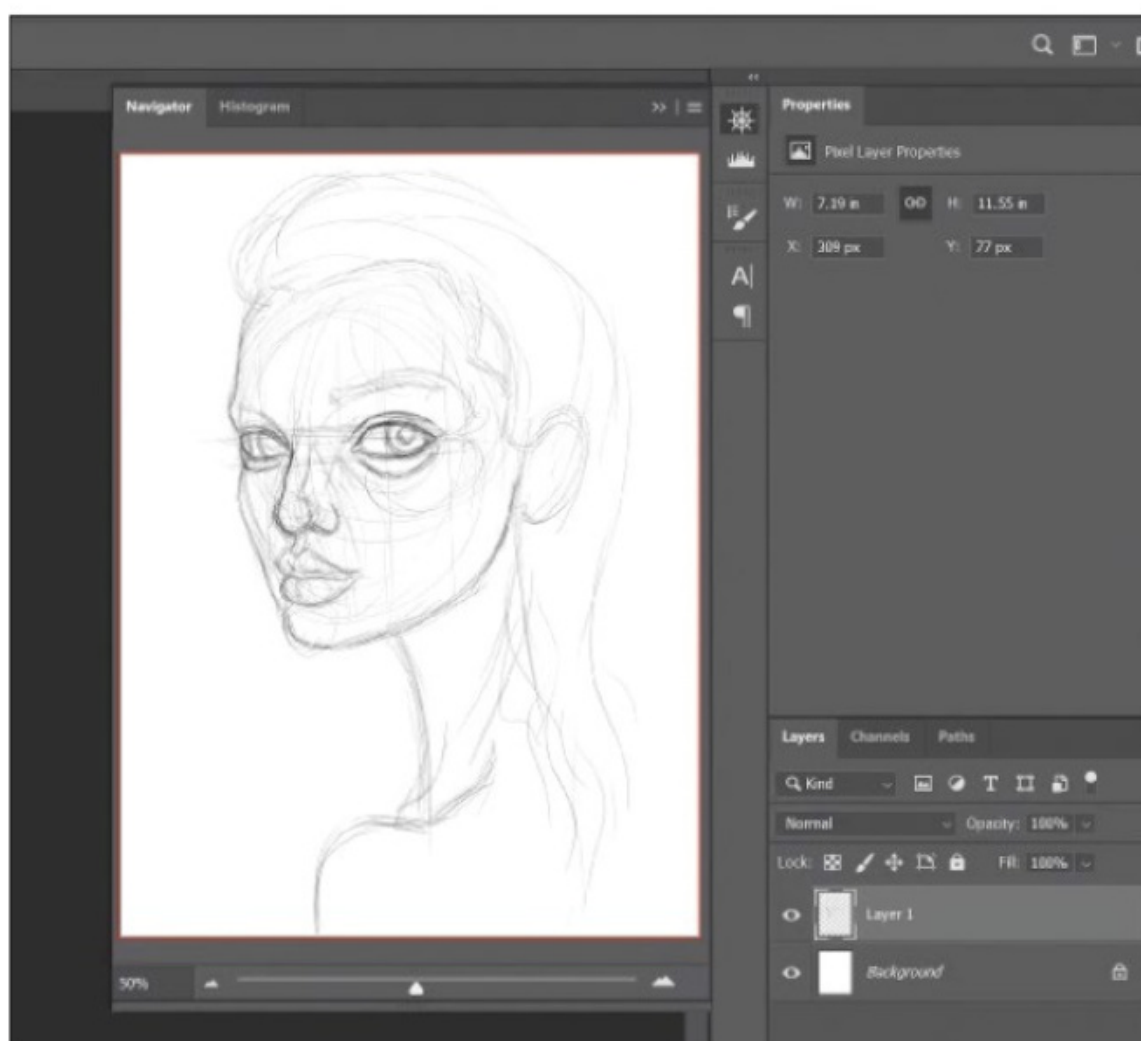


1 Set out your workspace logically

It's important to have your workspace organised before you begin. I like a large canvas, with a separate floating window to hold a reference photograph if necessary. Reference ensures that I can get the general look and lighting correct, but I'll never make a direct copy of the source material. I also have my own brushes at the ready on the bottom of the screen. ➡

In depth Painting wet skin





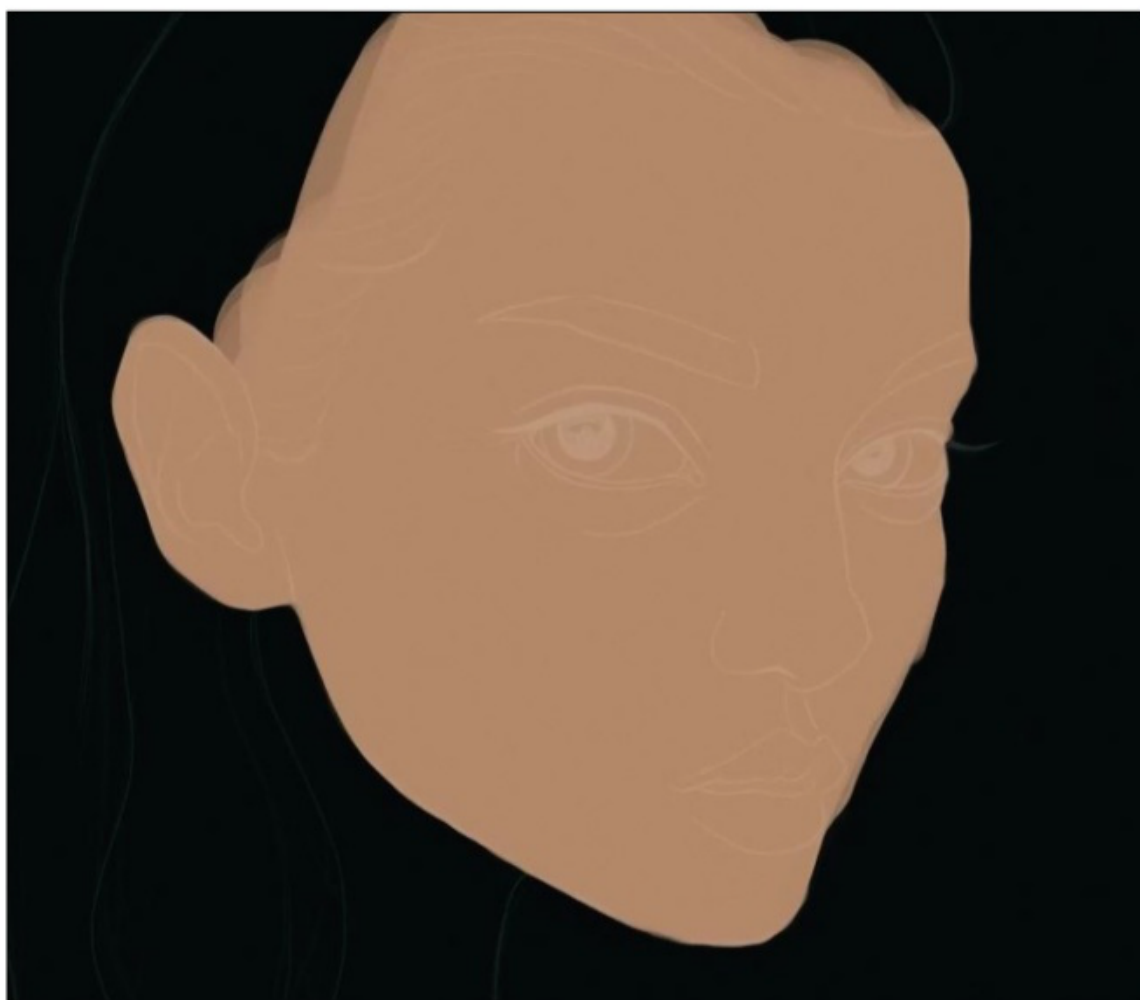
2 See the bigger picture

Another window I like to have open is the Navigator. When you're working on a painting or even a sketch you can get lost in the details because you're looking closely at the canvas. Having a version of the image in the Navigator enables you to quickly glance at the whole piece and spot potential problem areas you might miss.



3 Create a basic sketch

I like to take my time during this early stage in the process, and gradually build the sketch up using numerous layers, refining it with each revision. That said, it doesn't need to be exact – it's only here as a rough guide. I find that once you start laying down the colours the proportions will need adjusting as you work, which is where the Liquify tool comes in useful.



4 Lay down the base colour

Because this portrait has a dark background you won't be able to see the sketch as you work, so invert it to make it white. Fill the background in a dark grey, not black, and then begin to fill in the head area with a mid-tone skin colour. You can use the Eyedropper and choose a colour from the reference photo if you prefer.



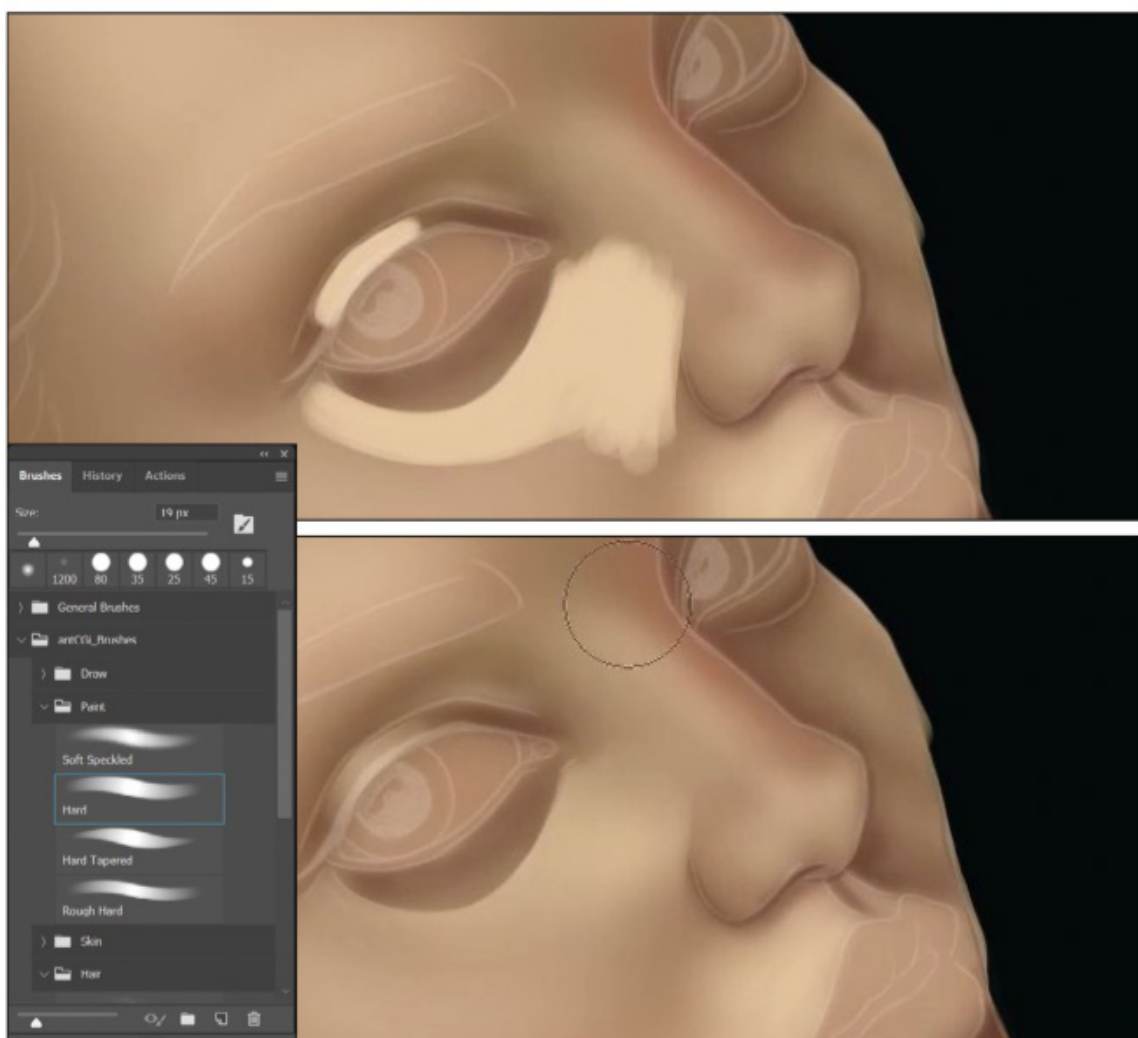
5 Introduce the basic shades

Out of my brushes I think the Soft Speckled is one of my all-time favourites – I use this most of the time. With the base colour set, create a new layer and press Alt while selecting the base skin layer to create a clipping mask. This will stop your strokes going outside the skin area. Now use the Soft Speckled brush to start roughing out some of the darker and lighter areas of the face.



6 Experiment with colours

Next, use a lighter skin tone and work in even more of the lighter areas, including the ear. Keep checking the reference to see where the light catches the cheek, brow and upper lip. You can also use this opportunity to experiment with other colours you can see in the photo, such as adding some red to the nose and cheek.



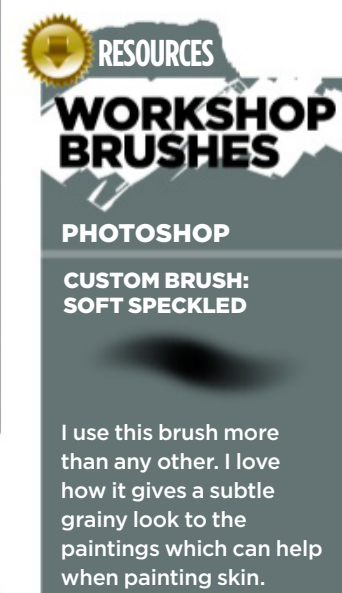
7 Apply creases to the face

It's time to start defining some of the creases around the eye. Choose a harder brush this time, the one called Hard, and block out the highlights where the nose meets the cheek. Also add a stroke on the upper eyelid. Switch to the Soft Speckled brush and gently erase around the edges, softening and blending this into the skin.



8 Add and remove definition where necessary

Carry on adding more definition around the crease of the nostril and upper lip, and around the cheek bone. This is how I do all my blending: I simply block in an area with the Hard brush and then gently remove it again using the Soft Speckled brush and the Eraser. This approach isn't limited to Photoshop; it can be use in any painting program. ➡





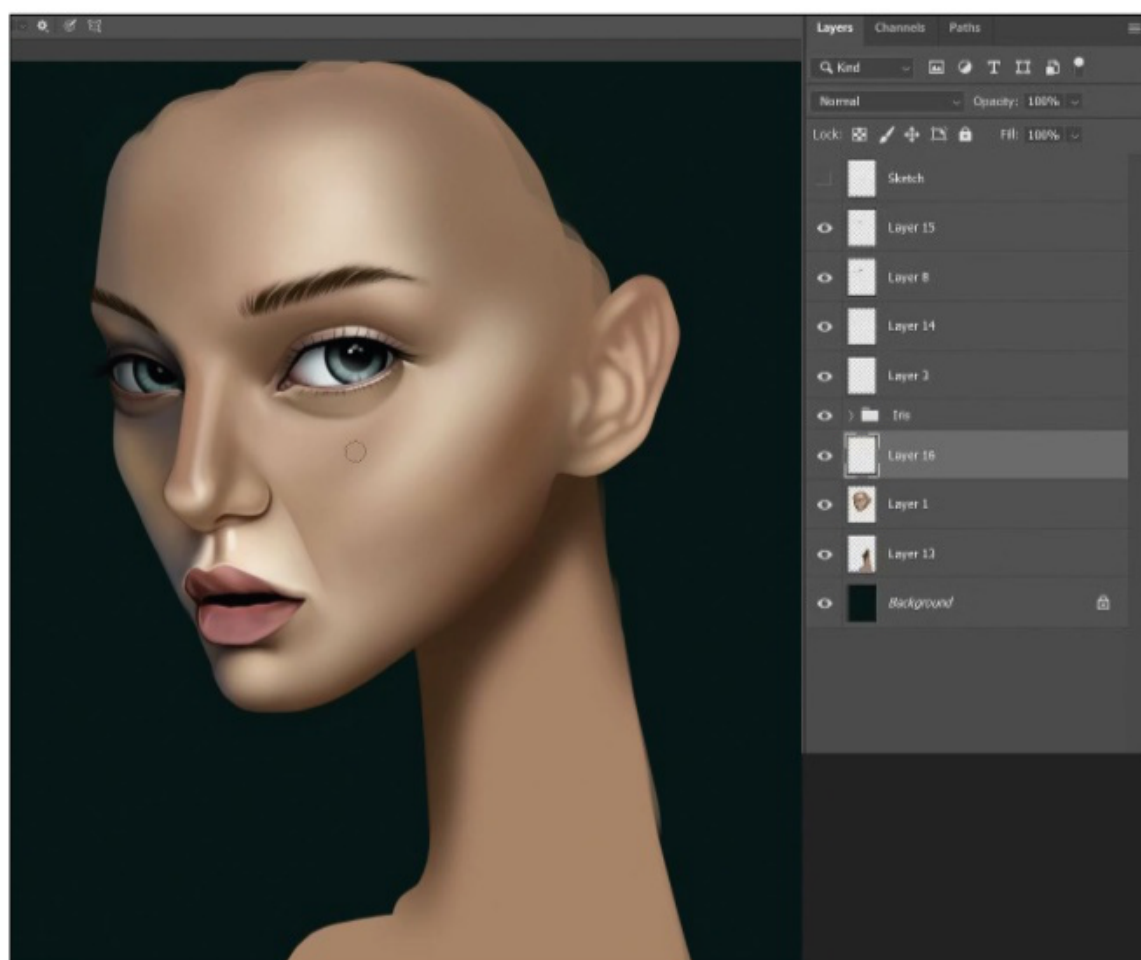
9 Developing colour variation

Now that you have a good base it's time to start adding in more colour. The face isn't just one tone – there are lots of greens, blues, pinks and oranges. Try to use the reference as a guide and add purple around the eyes, more red to the nose and cheek and an orange tint to the cheeks. Again, follow the same process, adding and removing to achieve the perfect blend.



10 Flip the canvas to reveal problems

Make sure that as you work you're flipping the canvas regularly (I recommend setting up a keyboard shortcut for this). Doing this helps to highlight problem areas with lighting and the proportions. You may also feel that some key facial features need to be implemented at this stage, such as the eyes, lips and nose. If anything, it'll be good to have a break from painting the skin.



11 Rinse and repeat

With the features in place you can then repeat the process, adding more layers and building up the contrast while also experimenting with colours. Contrast is key: it adds depth and brings the piece to life. Make sure that you're always glancing at the Navigator to make sure the tones are correct. In my experience, seeing things from a distance can help you balance the portrait.



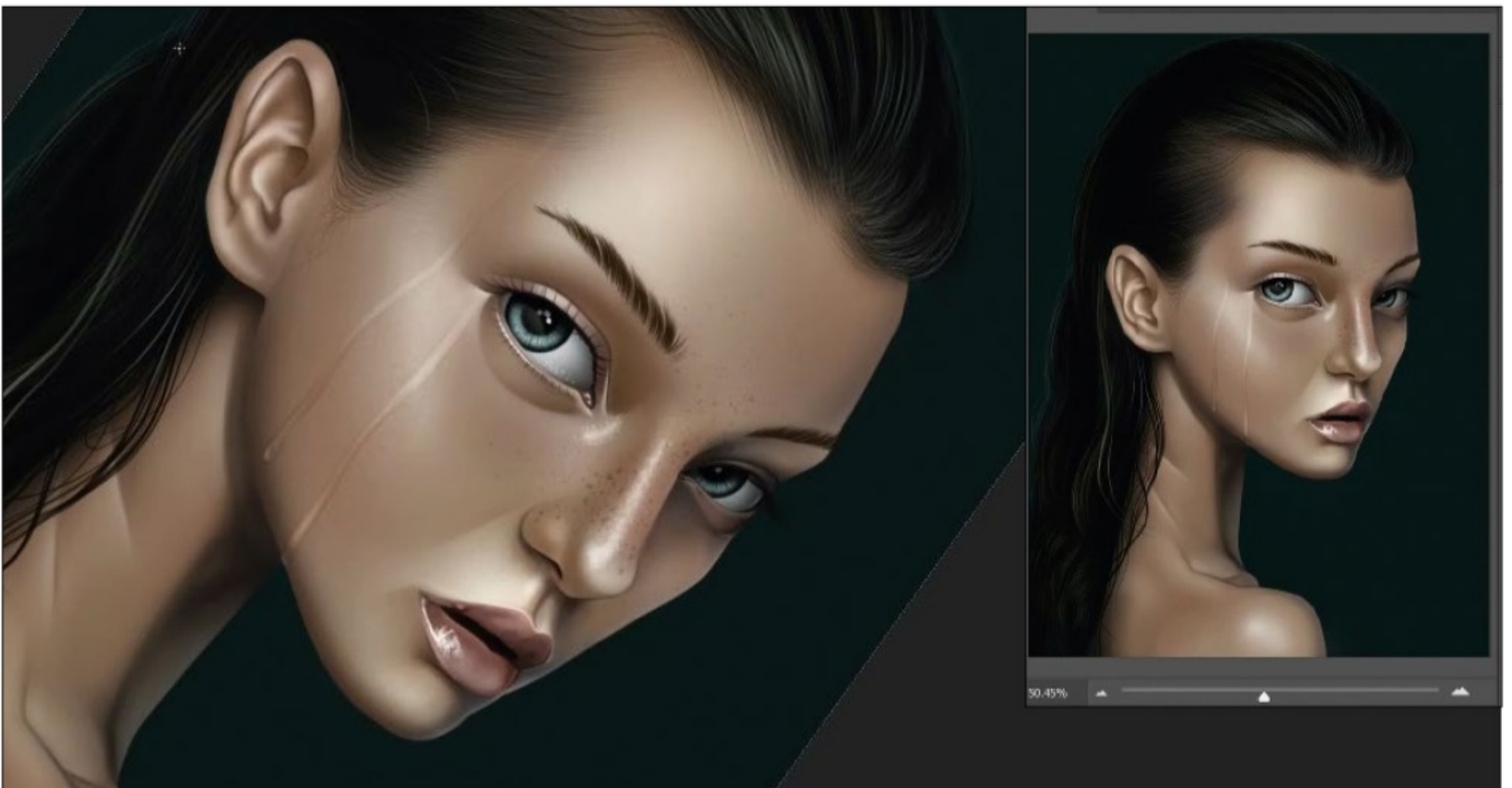
12 Paint highlights

The highlights are what bring the skin to life. They also help to portray the water resting on its surface. To add these, I simply use white and follow the same process as before. Block in an area and then pull it back with the softer brush. Be careful, though: go too far and your portrait can end up looking more like a plastic doll.



13 Illustrate water droplets and blend them against the skin

To create the water droplets running down her face, simply use the Hard brush to create the main trail. Use either an Overlay or Soft Light blending mode on that layer to blend them into the face and then add a new clipping layer, which will make it possible for you to paint the highlights and shadows on to each trail. As a final step, use white to add the droplets at the end.



14 Use the hair to gauge the success of the portrait

Adding the hair doesn't mean the portrait is complete. I never feel like you can finish working on the face until the hair is in place, because it helps to frame the face so you can check how the lighting and proportions work. From here it's a case of going back and repeating everything you've done so far. Add more depth, adjust the highlights and get those extra skin colours in place. ●



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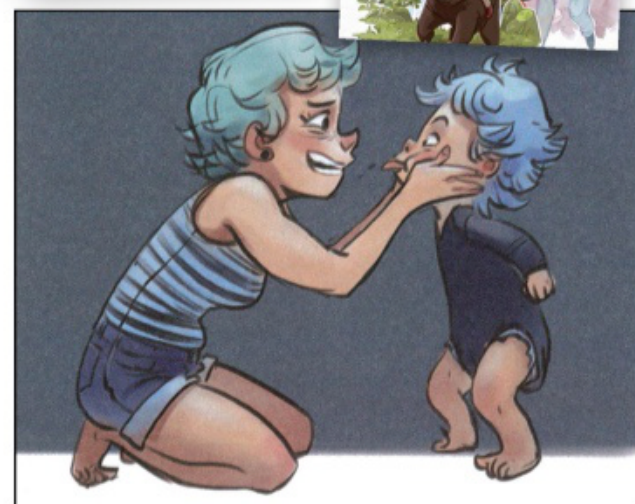
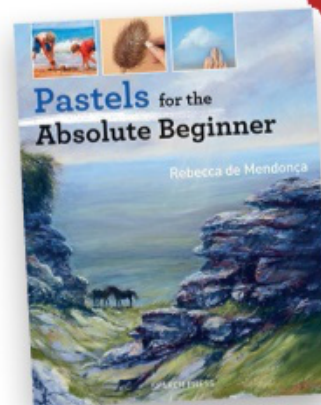
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

5
PRODUCTS
ON TEST



HARDWARE

96 Surface Pro 7

We see if Microsoft's latest tablet computer will tempt artists away from their iPads.

TRAINING

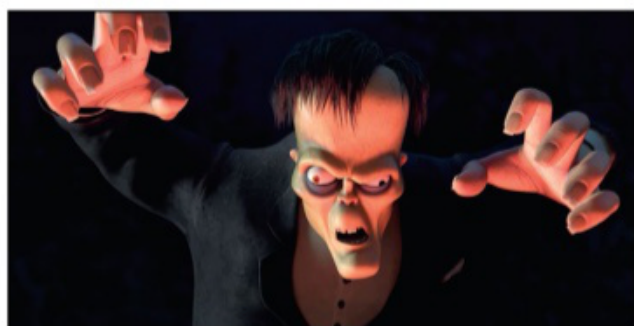
99 The Fulcrum of the Body: The Female Gluteus and Hips Parts 1 & 2

Learn how to capture a part of the female anatomy on the canvas with Patrick J Jones.

BOOKS

100 The Addams Family: The Art of the Animated Movie

Artists behind the new Addams Family film share how they brought the clan to life.



101 Pastels for the Absolute Beginner

Rebecca de Mendonça on getting started with this flexible and forgiving medium.

101 Sketch Every Day

Freelance illustrator Simone Grünwald shares the benefit of regular drawing.

RATINGS EXPLAINED

★★★★★ Magnificent

★★★★ Great

★★★ Good

★★ Poor

★ Atrocious



Both the Type Cover, which doubles as a screen protector and keyboard, and the Surface Pen are optional extras that are well worth purchasing.

Surface Pro 7

FLAT PACKED We put Microsoft's latest tablet computer, aimed at artists looking to move away from Apple's iPads, through its paces

Price From £799 **Company** Microsoft **Web** www.microsoft.com

The Surface Pro 7 is Microsoft's seventh attempt to create a tablet that's powerful enough to run full Windows 10 programs, while remaining sleek and light.

The Surface Pro line-up of tablets is supposed to be Microsoft's flagship Surface device, and one that – on paper at least – is ideally suited for artists. Yet after the Surface Pro 6 proved to be a solid yet unexciting entry, many were hoping that Microsoft would pull out the stops with the Surface Pro 7.

As with previous version of the Surface Pro, the Surface Pro 7 comes in a variety of configurations. The base model costs £799, and this gives you an Intel Core i3 processor, 4GB of RAM and a 128GB solid-state drive. This is very pricey for a tablet, especially considering that Apple's excellent iPad Air costs almost half the price at £479,

“The Surface Pro 7 has a sharp display that's also bright and vibrant”

while the iPad Pro 11 costs £769. It's also pretty expensive when you consider those specs. For any sort of creative work, 4GB RAM is just not enough – and that 128GB hard drive is going to fill up quickly if you store large files such as photos and videos. Artists should only be considering configurations with at least 8GB of RAM and 256GB storage. A version of the Surface Pro 7 with those specs, and a more powerful Intel Core i5 processor, begins at £1,119.

In short, that's incredibly expensive. You can even go as high as an Intel



The Kickstand can be adjusted to place the screen at different angles.



Microsoft's specially designed Surface mouse snaps flat, for ease of travel.

Core i7, 16GB RAM and 1TB SSD, which costs a huge £2,249. For that kind of money, you're better off looking at a laptop like Apple's 16-inch MacBook Pro, which starts at £2,399.

It's also worth pointing out that even with these high prices, the Surface's Type Cover (which protects the screen and doubles as a keyboard) and the Surface Pen stylus aren't included. You'll need to buy them separately at a cost of £125 and £100, respectively.

HARDWARE IMPROVEMENTS

One of the key benefits the Surface Pro 7 has that it uses Intel's latest 10th generation processors. The result is improved overall performance compared to the Surface Pro 6. Intel has also improved the integrated graphics of its 10th generation CPUs: the Surface Pro 7 is now better at handling graphic-intensive tasks such as video rendering, as well as even some light gaming.

While the performance of the Surface Pro 7 is a decent step-up from the Surface Pro 6, the same can't be said for the battery life, which we found to be shorter than its predecessor. We found that the Surface Pro 7's battery lasted six hours when running a looped 1080p video. That's well below the eight hours and 45 minutes the Pro 6 achieved.

The Surface Pro 7's screen is 12.3-inches, with a 2,736 x 1,824 resolution and 3:2 aspect ratio. That



The 12.3-inch touchscreen automatically adjusts to lighting conditions.

offers a pixel density of 267 pixels per inch, and results in an impressively sharp display that's also bright and vibrant. However, it doesn't support standards like sRGB or P3, which means if you're after a tool that offers industry-accurate colours, then this is probably not the right device for you.

Perhaps the biggest selling point of the Surface Pro 7 is that it's a tablet which is able to run Windows 10, while also being able to turn into a laptop if you need to fire off some emails (and have the optional Type Cover). If you do grab the optional extras, you'll find the Microsoft Surface Pro 7 to be a versatile device. The Type Cover is made of a gorgeous Alcantara fabric which feels lovely, and gives the Surface Pro 7 a premium look and feel.

Despite doubling as a cover, the Type Cover also does a good job as a

keyboard, with the keys being large enough to hit accurately when typing fast, and with enough travel to make them feel satisfying when pressed. We wish Microsoft would include the Type Cover, and the Surface Pen (which works brilliantly), because they are essential to getting the full Surface Pro 7 experience.

ACCESS THE POWER OF WINDOWS

The Surface Pro 7 is a tempting device if you're looking for a tablet computer that has enough power to run full Windows 10 programs. However, while it's undoubtedly a stylish and powerful tablet, it does feel like Microsoft hasn't put a lot of passion into this version. Everything seems like a little iterative upgrade, rather than a revolutionary leap. This means that the cheaper Surface Pro 6 is a better buy for people on a budget, as you're not sacrificing much – and you get a better battery life as well.

At the moment the Surface Pro 7 is just too expensive when compared to the iPad. Apple's tablets offer a comparable experience with better battery lives, and for a lot less. Meanwhile, there are plenty of Android tablets out there which offer even better value for money.

Unless you're wedded to Windows 10, we suggest skipping the Surface Pro 7. Hopefully Microsoft will come back with a new Surface Pro in 2020 that will give artists a reason to fall in love with its portable devices again.

DETAILS

Features

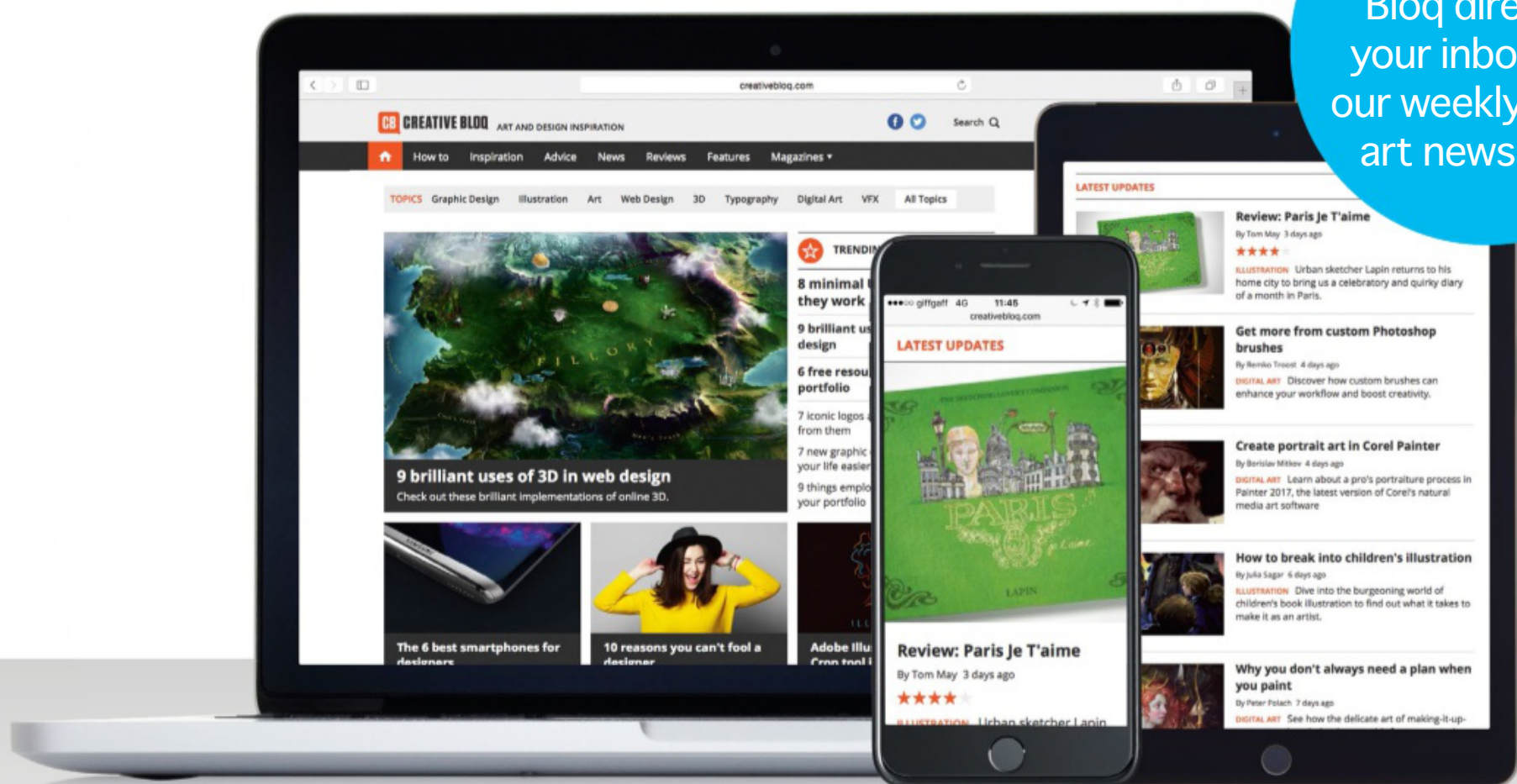
- 12.3 inch touchscreen
- 2,736 x 1,824 resolution
- Windows 10 Home
- Intel Core i3, i5 or i7 processor
- 4GB, 8GB or 16GB RAM
- 128GB, 256GB, 512GB or 1TB SSD
- 1 x USB C
- 1 x USB A
- 3.5mm jack
- microSDXC card reader
- 5MP front facing camera, 8MP rear-facing camera (both with 1080p full HD video)

Rating



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Graphic design

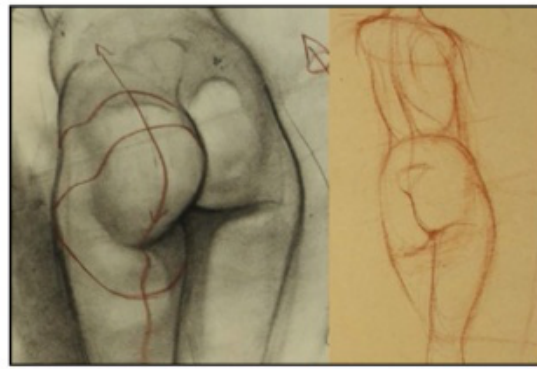
Art

Web design

3D

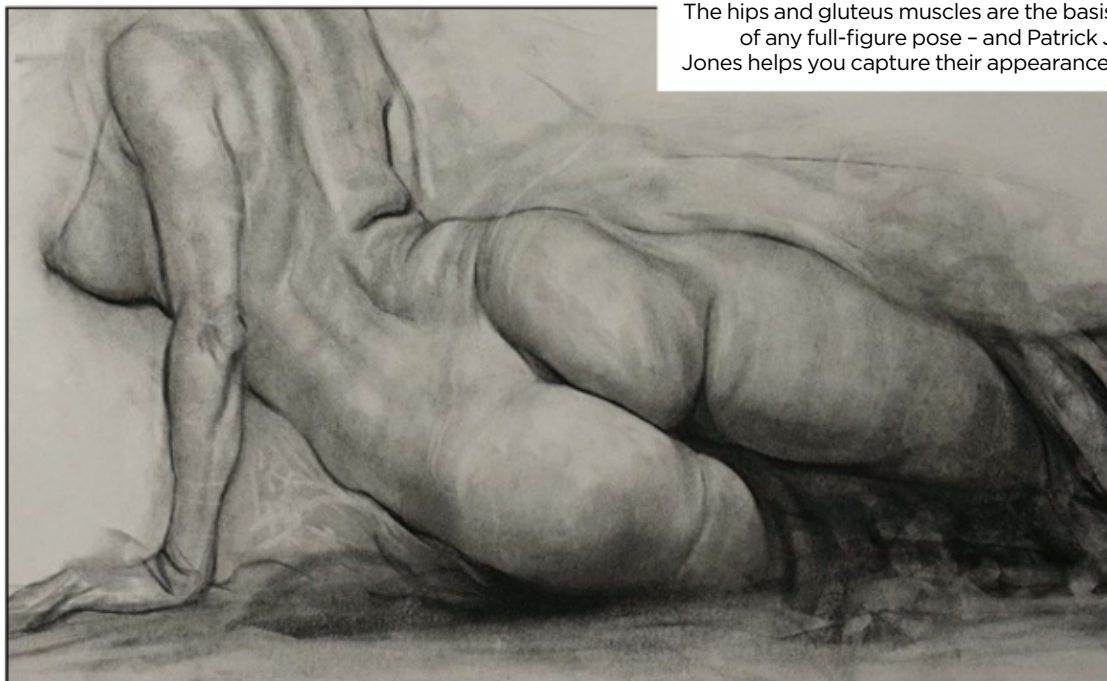
Digital art

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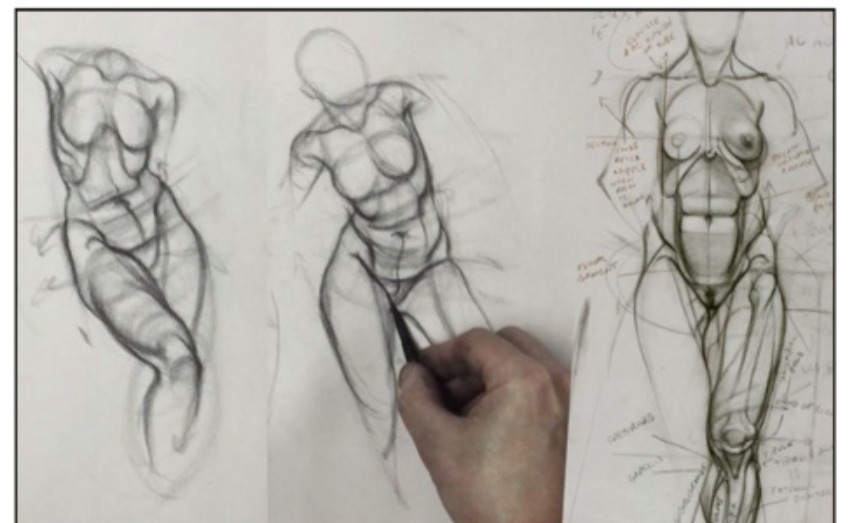


Shape becomes structure and then form as Patrick explores where the light falls and what types of shadows are made.

Patrick's initial quick sketches show how the hips and bottom interact with the rest of the torso as it twists and turns.



The hips and gluteus muscles are the basis of any full-figure pose – and Patrick J Jones helps you capture their appearance.



The Fulcrum of the Body: The Female Gluteus and Hips Parts 1 & 2

BUTT SERIOUSLY Learn the secrets of capturing a part of the female anatomy on the canvas with this video masterclass from painter and illustrator Patrick J Jones

Publisher Patrick J Jones **Price** £17 **Format** Download **Web** www.pjartworks.com

Compared with the head or the hand, a figure's hips and bottom area might not be a part of the anatomy that you pay much attention to when you're learning to draw the human body. But in this pair of videos (sold on Patrick J Jones' website for £8.50 each), the artist presents a convincing case that the hips and gluteus muscles make a critical contribution to ensuring any full-figure pose looks convincing.

The evidence comes with the quick torso sketches that Patrick makes in the first part. His figures in this sequence bend, twist and turn in natural ways as Patrick demonstrates the relationship between different parts of the torso, and how to make each pose look balanced. The artist builds on these first sketches to show how the legs flow from the hips and bottom, rather than looking like



DETAILS

Topics covered

- Muscle and structure
- Effects of gravity
- Gesture and rhythm
- Drawing with your whole arm
- Shadow types
- Depicting form
- Tools and materials

Length

196 minutes

Rating



they're separate anatomical parts that have been glued on.

The principles Patrick establishes in the first part are expanded upon in the second video, where the main focus is on a single study for a pose for an oil painting. It's here that you really come to understand Patrick's methodology. By making initial fast, loose sketches, his drawing for the more detailed study stays freed up rather than tight.

Outside of the helpful anatomical advice, there's a crucial takeaway from this pair of videos: learning to draw in a relaxed manner ensures the lines you put down become gestures that are full of life and rhythm. This in turn will bring your two-dimensional figure to life. As well as making you look again at a neglected part of the body in many artists' work, Patrick's authoritative guidance and techniques will help you develop your drawing skills, whatever your subject.

ARTIST PROFILE

PATRICK J JONES

Belfast-born Patrick was inspired to take up art by Boris Vallejo and Frank Frazetta. Moving to London was the first step on a path that would see him travel the world as an illustrator. His paintings grace the covers of authors including Simon R Green and HG Wells and he's painted concept art for films such as Peter Pan and The Great Raid. Patrick's written several

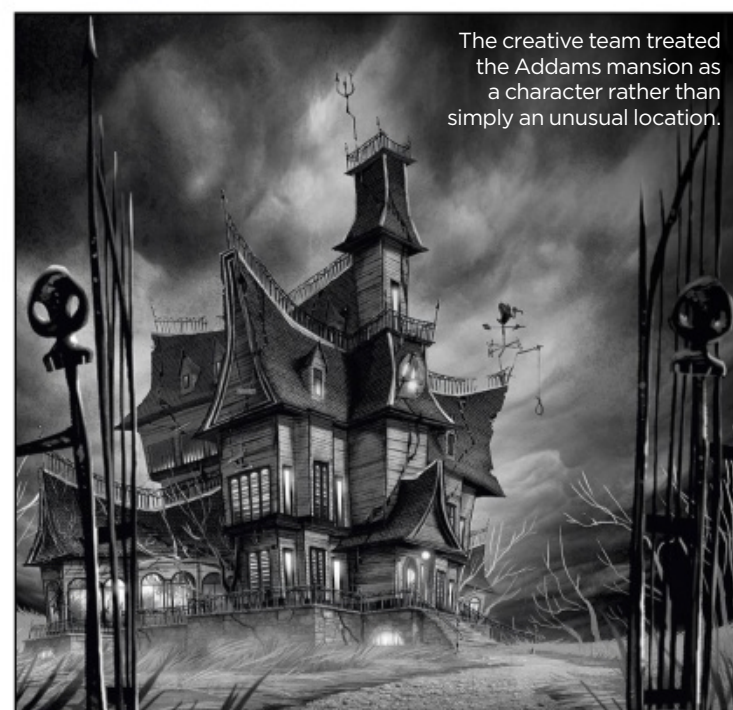


books on art and teaches his Anatomy of Style workshops both at universities and online.

www.pjartworks.com



A caricature of Hollywood actor Michael Shannon was the basis for Lurch's face.



The creative team treated the Addams mansion as a character rather than simply an unusual location.

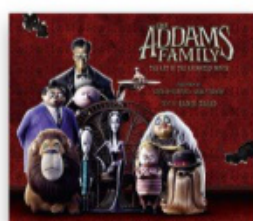
The Addams Family: The Art of the Animated Movie

AW, SNAP The creative team behind the new CG Addams Family film share how they brought the creepy, kooky family to life

Author Ramin Zahed **Publisher** Titan Books **Price** £30 **Web** www.titanbooks.com **Available** Now

Depending on your age, you'll likely have a mental picture of what the Addams Family looks like. Perhaps you remember the television series from the 1960s, or maybe you caught the big screen adaptations in the early 1990s. This familiarity was a challenge for the creative team behind the new CG Addams Family film, as they had to find a new take on the iconic characters.

Their solution, as is made clear in this art book for the new animated movie, was to go back to the original Addams Family cartoons, which first appeared in The New Yorker in the 1930s. Drawn by Charles Addams, these cartoons provided a jumping-off point in terms of the story, character design and art style.



Unlike the live action adaptations, this animated version had the ability to echo Charles' illustrations more faithfully. In the handful of original Addams cartoons contained in this book, it's clear to see how character elements such as Pugsley's eyes and Uncle Fester's physique have been carried over and made to work in 3D. There's also room for variation though, and we particularly like the way Wednesday's hair is plaited into a pair

“This animated version had the ability to echo Charles' illustrations more faithfully”



Home makeover show host Margaux Needler corners Gomez Addams in this storyboard sketch.

of hangman's knots. Considering that so much is made of this reliance on the cartoon source material though, it's disappointing that only a few of them appear in these pages. In his foreword, co-director and producer Conrad Vernon points out how they delved into Charles' work to find new family members, storylines and character designs, but again these barely get a look, apart from a few family portraits.

Similarly, concept art for Auntie Sloom, octopus Socrates and Kitty the lion are presented without any explanation. There's also talk throughout about how this film wants to use the Addams Family to tell an immigrant story and celebrate the diversity of 'the other'; however, this is never elaborated on, either.

Areas that do get covered in detail include the design of the central family members, the Addams' mansion, and new characters Parker and Margaux Needler, who represent the buttoned-down antithesis of the Addams clan. And from the concept art, moody atmosphere and film stills, it's obvious that a lot of passion has been poured into making these elements stand apart from other animated films, even if it doesn't always come across here.

RATING ★★★★★



"Too cool for school" was the inspiration behind designer Craig Kellman's work on Parker Needler, one of the new characters who appear in the film.

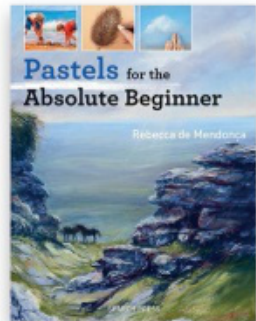
Pastels for the Absolute Beginner

PASTEL PRIMER Artist and teacher Rebecca de Mendonça shows you how to get started with the flexible and forgiving medium

Author Rebecca de Mendonça **Publisher** Search Press **Price** £13 **Web** www.searchpress.com **Available** Now

Have you dabbled with cheap pastels but decided to stick with pencils and paints? If so, you're not alone. Rebecca de Mendonça says that lots of artists would like to have a greater understanding of pastels and their potential, and in this guide she helps you to achieve just that.

Going back to basics, Rebecca explains what pastels are, how different types of stick vary and the



Rebecca uses smudging techniques to depict the cat's soft white fur.

range of marks they can create. She reveals how these drawing techniques can be combined, and there's also practical artistic advice that will bolster your work in other mediums.

Despite its best intentions, this book might be beyond the reach of absolute beginners. The introduction to drawing is too brief to be of any real assistance, but sections on tone and colour should prove useful to readers with a little bit of artistic experience.

Where it really matters however, this guide completely delivers. Rebecca shows how to layer, blend and shade with pastels to stunning effect, as well as offering advice on mistakes to avoid. If you're looking for advice on your next steps with this versatile medium, this is a great place to begin.

RATING ★★★★★



The paper's deep red helps to accentuate the drama of Rebecca's take on Carabosse, a wicked fairy.

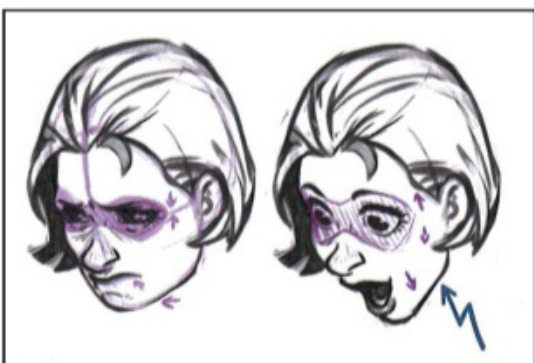
Sketch Every Day

DRAWING DISCIPLINE Freelance illustrator Simone Grünewald shares the benefit of regular drawing, and shows you what she's learnt

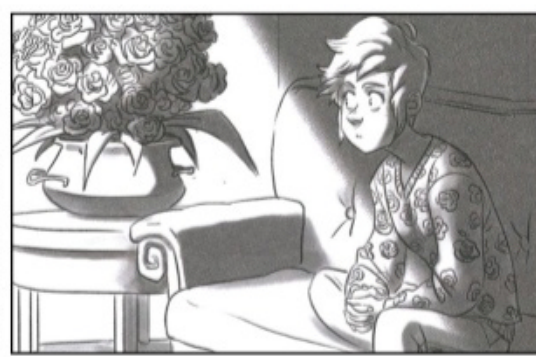
Author Simone Grünewald **Publisher** 3dtotal Publishing **Price** £23 **Web** www.3dtotal.com **Available** Now

The first blank page of a new sketchbook can be intimidating. What if your drawing isn't any good and it shakes your confidence? This is exactly what happened to Simone Grünewald, but it motivated her to draw (nearly) every single day.

Simone's under no delusion that the habit of sketching isn't an easy one to get into. In this book, however, she shows you how grabbing five minutes



Simone explains how picturing a character from a different angle can help to convey an emotion more clearly.



here and there all adds up, along with personal life experiences that helped her to develop her work.

Going by its title, you'd expect this book to contain daily challenges or working methods to consider. This isn't the case, but instead we're presented with a wealth of sketches that enable Simone to demonstrate key principles such as perspective and depth, how to tell a story, and how to communicate what a character is feeling.



Touching on her creative journey, artist advice, art fundamentals, character design, and a glimpse into how she juggles her work around her family life, Simone covers a lot of useful approaches that artists will be able to put into action. It's difficult to trace a line between the title and the contents, although the advice inside is a novel take that's worth checking out.

RATING ★★★★★

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Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

Workshops assets are available...

If you see the video workshop badge then you can watch the artist in action. Turn to page 8 to see how you can get hold of the video.

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This issue:

104 Traditional FXPosé

Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional art, which has been sent in by you!

108 Workshop: Create realistic textures using ink

Devin Elle Kurtz takes her work from line art to ink wash to dry brushing to finishing highlights, creating a piece full of textures.

114 First Impressions: Fred Fields

Seeing the work of Norman Rockwell in person had a profound effect on this US artist.

104



FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



Owen William Weber

LOCATION: US **MEDIA:** Oil **WEB:** www.oweber.com

Illustrator Owen mostly works on fantasy commissions, while his personal art has evolved into images of dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures.



2 **ANKYLOSAURUS**

"My oil paintings usually show these animals from Earth's history in the more natural, mundane moment in their lives."



1 **QUETZALCOATLUS**

"I'm trying to create imagery showing what happens to dinosaurs during the in-between moments."



3 TYRANNOSAURUS FAMILY

"This painting is based on the idea that Tyrannosaurs were very good parents, teaching their young to hunt and fend for themselves."



4 UTAHRAPTOR

"All my dinosaur artworks are researched and kept up to date with the science of each creature."



Allan-Diego Carrasco

LOCATION: France **MEDIA:** Polymer clay, Epoxy putty **WEB:** www.allancarrasco.net

Allan-Diego is a sculptor who works for the gaming industry and collectors. He mainly uses polymer clay and epoxy putty, while his personal works include statuettes of mythological beings and wooden puppets.

1 **PENTACEROTAUR**

"This was a commission for Blacksun Miniatures, an English miniatures company. I did a lot of these creatures called "therianthropes" – basically an anthropomorphic body with an animal head. Here the source creature is a pentaceratops."

2 **ANCIENT MAYA WOMAN**

"Depiction of a Maya character from history. I tried to be as accurate as possible by including characteristic elements such as an elongated skull, jewellery and a distinctive hair cut."



3 **COURGERITTE**

"A benevolent being, spirit of nature and a helper of true humans. The design was inspired by Hopi Kachinas figures."

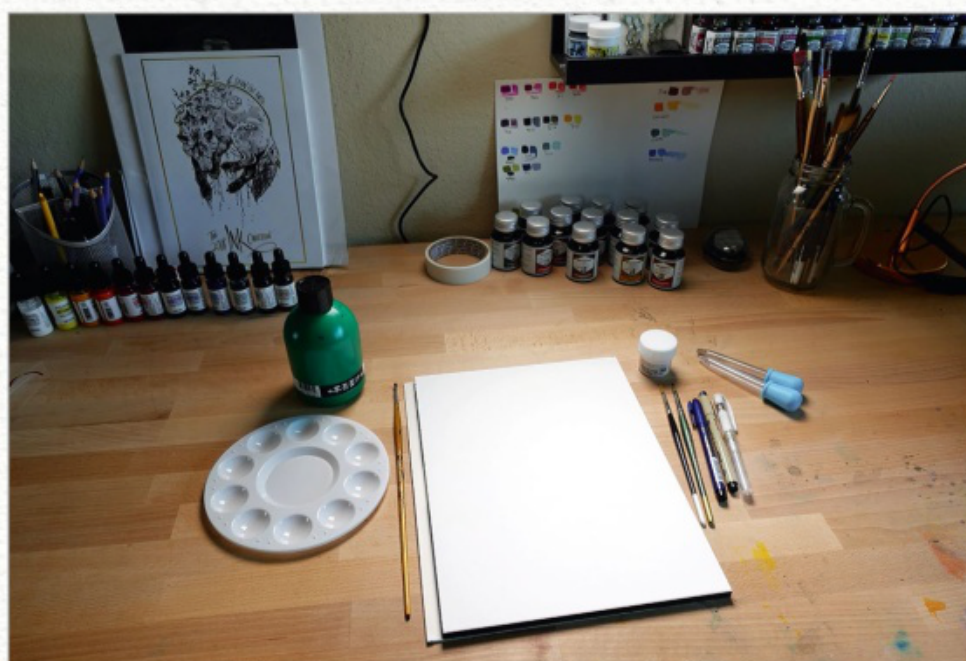
4 **EBYLZADEATH**

"This necromancer was a commission by Figone, a French miniatures company."

4







Ink

CREATE REALISTIC TEXTURES USING INK

DEVIN ELLE KURTZ explains her ink illustration process from line art to ink wash to dry brushing to finishing highlights, as she creates a piece full of natural textures

Back in October 2018 I decided to pick up ink for the first time and try the yearly Inktober art challenge. I discovered that despite being such a simple medium, the variety of texture and the degree of realism I could achieve with brush and ink was astounding.

I've since experimented with how far I can push this medium to achieve the diverse textures of the natural



world. My work is often inspired by themes of life and death, creatures, plants and magic. My desire to craft a visual experience of fur, feathers, skulls and grasses led me to explore a number of methods of applying ink.

USING A MIX OF BRUSH TYPES

Creating an ink illustration involves varying the amounts of ink and water, using a variety of brush textures, and adjusting the motion and pressure used to apply the ink. I use a mix of soft watercolour and stiffer acrylic brushes for my drawings.

The soft texture of a watercolour brush is perfect for ink washes, and thinning the ink with water enables you to create a palette of wash shades that can be used like greyscale watercolour paints. If you're familiar with watercolour, ink functions fairly similarly but tends to dry more quickly, doesn't reactivate with water, and has a grainier appearance than many of the watercolours I'm familiar with. Because ink doesn't reactivate

with water you can layer ink washes a bit like Multiply layers in Photoshop.

The stiffer acrylic brushes are perfect for dry-brushing ink onto the paper to create realistic hair, grass, and fur textures. I employ both a well-kept acrylic brush for smooth dry brush textures (such as slick grasses) and a frayed acrylic brush for wilder, more uneven dry brush textures (such as fur and feathers.)

Ink is an incredibly versatile medium, and I love it because it's also quite approachable for anybody. It grows as you grow as an artist, offering more opportunities when you're ready for them. I hope that this workshop allows you a window into my experience with the world of ink.



Devin is an illustrator and visual development artist, and works as the lead background painter on the

Netflix show *Disenchantment*. In her free time she likes painting a magical world of unearthly creatures and starry gods. See more at www.devinellekurtz.com.



Traditional Artist **Workshop**



1 *Transferring the sketch*

I sketch digitally because it enables me to experiment freely and restart without regret. Once I'm happy with my sketch I print it out and use my Huion light pad to create my line-art on a piece of Arches hot press watercolour paper. I tape the paper to the light pad so nothing moves around.



2 *Line-art techniques*

I use three main tools to create my line-art: Zebra super-fine brush tip pens for the thicker lines, and Micron .005 and .1 pens for the thinner lines. I use thicker lines to direct attention to the focal area of the piece, and thinner lines to create fine details and areas of rest.

MATERIALS

PENS

- Zebra brush pen (super fine tip)
- Micron pens (sizes .005, .01, .03 and .05)

LIGHT PAD

- Huion A4 LED light pad

BRUSHES

- Utrecht Sablette faux sable Round brushes sizes 0, 4, 6, and 12
- Isabey Isacryl size 4 Round brush
- Frayed Isabey Isacryl size 0 Round brush for scratchy textures

INK

- Yasutomo black Sumi ink
- Signo Uniball white ink pen

PAPER

- Arches hot press 9x12 watercolour paper (300gsm)



3 *Mixing ink washes*

I mix water with ink to create six shades of grey and swatch them out on a piece of test paper. I use eyedroppers to control the amount of ink and water in each shade. I use a brush to mix each wash thoroughly so that it'll apply evenly.



4 *Rendering the skull*

Using my leopard skull cast as reference I render the skull in the drawing. I add water to my brush whenever I need to create a fade effect. Sometimes I begin with a lighter shade and then add a darker wash to one side of the wet area, which creates a gradient.



5 Dry-brushing the fur

I paint the fur hood using my frayed faux sable brush. I add no water to the brush, only pure ink; this texture is created with a dry brush. Short, directional strokes accomplish the bushy effect.



6 Fine-liner details

I use my .01 and .03 Micron fine-liner pens to go in and control the look of the fur coat. I design little clumps of fur across the hood using quick, purposeful strokes. Fur generally clumps in a triangular or diamond pattern. Fur looks most realistic when it is varied; even-looking fur looks artificial.



7 Dry-brushing the braid

Using the frayed faux sable brush again I paint the girl's braid using a dry-brush technique. This time I add more ink to the brush to create an appearance of glossy dark hair, making sure to leave a lighter area where the highlight sits. I add a wash to darken the highlight.



8 Details of the face

I take my lightest shades on ink wash and add a bit of warm rosiness across her cheeks and nose. I fill in her irises with a medium-grey, and paint her eyebrows using micron pens and dry-brushing with short directional strokes. ➡



9 *Developing the iris texture*

To create the grainy texture in her irises I take my dry frayed brush with the smallest bit of ink and paint tiny controlled circles with a very light amount of pressure. I test out various amounts of pressure on a test sheet before putting ink down on the final illustration.



10 *Creating the details in the clothing*

I use my medium grey shades of ink to fill in the details in her outfit. I want this area to have less contrast than around their faces so viewers don't focus on this part of the piece. I decide early on what the focal area of the piece will be, and design the rest to lead to it.



11 *Dry-brushing the enchanted grasses*

Taking an acrylics size 8 Round brush I use a softer dry-brush texture to paint in the magical grasses that hold the skeleton creature together. I use a controlled amount of pressure to get an even distribution of dry ink. I use the tip of the brush to create darker, narrower details.





12 *Finishing the dry-brushing*

The technique I use to paint this texture takes a bit of practice and experimentation. I always have a test sheet next to my drawing so I can try out the pressure and motions necessary to create each stroke before applying it to the final piece.



13 *Washing over dry brush*

Before allowing the dry brushed ink to dry completely, I use a medium-dark ink wash to unify the creature's body and soften the grainy texture of the dry brush. The combination of the grainy texture with some of the bleeding-wash edges creates a unique appearance and evens out the tone of the creature's body.



14 *Shading the shawl*

To darken and unify the girl's torso I add a soft cast shadow using a medium-light ink wash. I break up the edge of the shadow in a jagged motion to create the illusion of volume on her fur shawl. I try to create a variety of soft and hard edges to each shadow to mimic reality.



15 *Applying white highlights*

Finally, I use my Signo Uniball white ink pen to add the little dots of white magic that adorn all of my magical skeleton creatures. I also add little highlight lines to create dimension. I try to vary the size and placement of the highlights to create an even but randomised pattern.

First Impressions

✧ Fred Fields ✧

Norman Rockwell's work had a profound effect on this artist



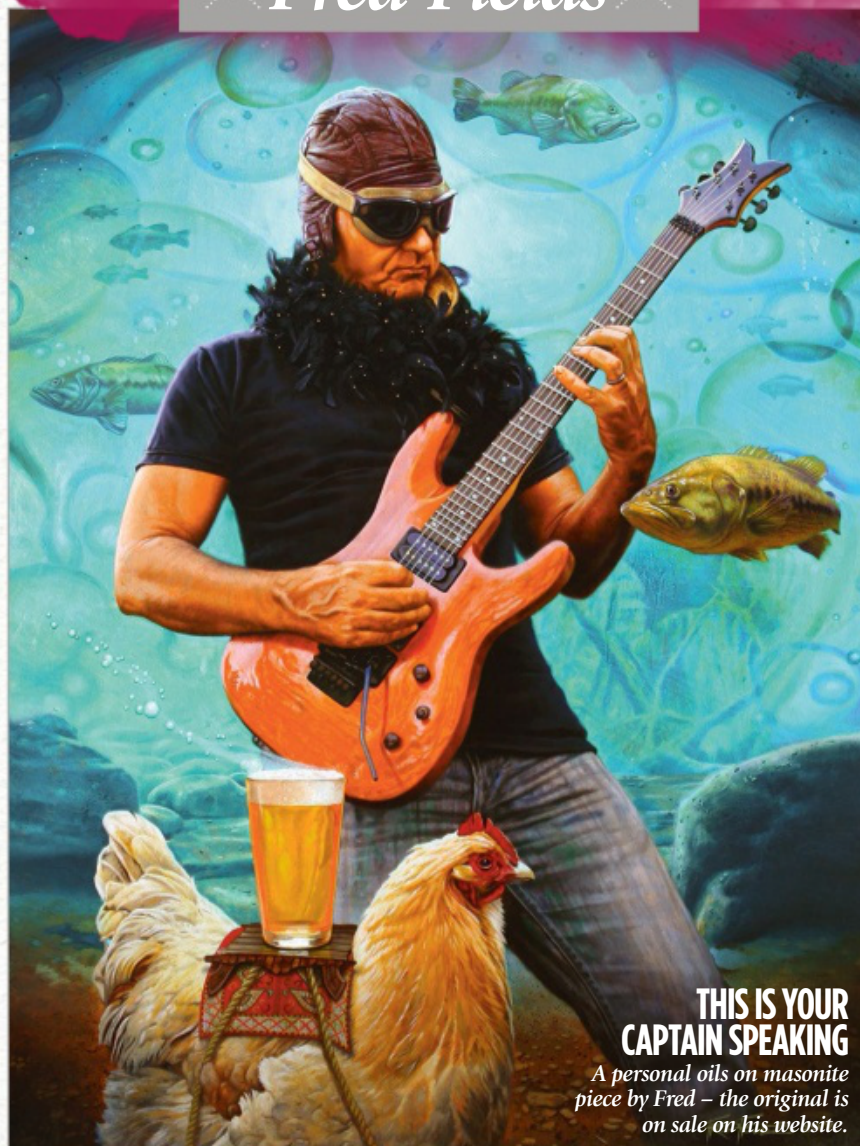
Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I don't know that growing up in Kentucky influenced my art. If it did, I'm not aware of it. However, moving around the country, meeting new people and working with other artists absolutely influenced my art.

After living elsewhere for roughly 30 years I moved back to Kentucky. I see it through different eyes now. I see people and places that I'd love to use as a jumping-off point for a painting. Not far from my house I spotted a group of buzzards eating something on the railroad tracks. I took tons of photos which yielded the painting Buzzard in the Rain. I see so much painting potential in my surroundings and in the people who I meet.

Is there a painting that you saw in your formative years that changed everything? What was it?

It wasn't one painting but four: Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms. A few years ago my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting the Norman Rockwell Museum in the town of Stockbridge, MA, where they



“I see so much painting potential in my surroundings and in the people I meet”

BAM

An oil on illustration board piece that's part of the Surreal Salon show in Baton Rouge.



occupy their own room. It was what I would imagine a religious experience to be like.

Tell us about your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent? I remember doing a black and white freelance piece while attending Central Academy of Commercial Art in Cincinnati. The art director had contacted my teacher, Mike McGuire, and Mike asked if I was interested. I said, "Sure!" Does it look good? Nah, it looks like an AD put together a pamphlet on the cheap and hired a student to do the illo. I don't remember what I was paid, but it put gas in the Duster.



BUZZARD IN THE RAIN

Fred painted this piece after taking photographs of buzzards feeding near his Kentucky home.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two differ?

Fast forward 35 years and I painted This is Your Captain Speaking. This is a personal piece; the idea just evolved on its own. There were a few thumbnail versions, but the idea was fairly solid when I began painting it.

How has the industry of art changed for good since you've been working in it?

Man, I started working in the mid-80s. I sent sketches and paintings by way of FedEx. I spoke to art directors by telephone. I took reference shots on film. Samples had to be printed out in mass and sent out. I didn't have a computer or Photoshop. I had pencil, tracing paper and a Kinko's nearby. I don't know what has changed in the industry but I know what has changed for me as an artist: the technology.

Is making a living as an artist all you thought it would be?

It's definitely feast and famine and can be tough, but I do what I love.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

Keep a more open mind, always be a student and invest in Microsoft.

Fred has worked for advertising firm Leo Burnett, TSR, Inc., Wizards of the Coast and Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment. Currently, Fred paints commissions, personal pieces and works at Ink Well Tattoo. You can see more of his art at www.fmfdsd.fineartstudioonline.com.

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